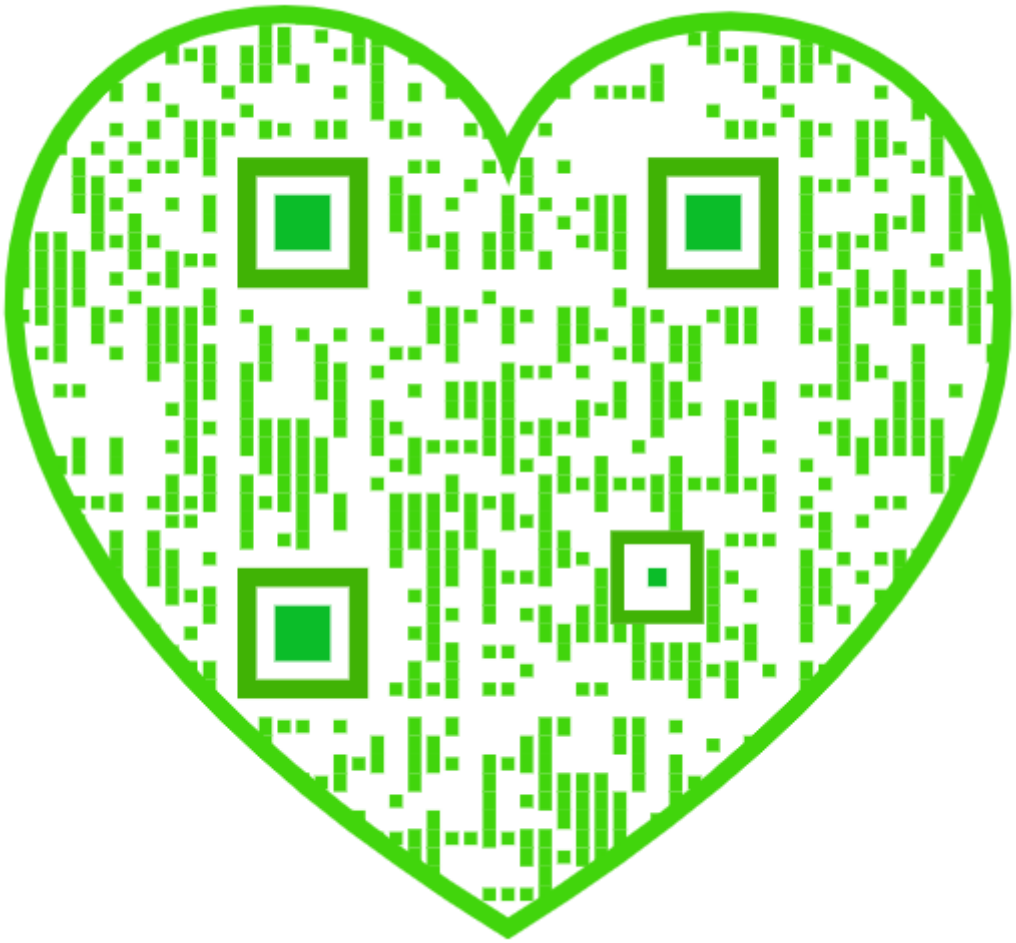


THE BADMINTON MAGAZINE

OF

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

VOL. VIII.

THE

BADMINTON MAGAZINE

OF

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

EDITED BY

ALFRED E. T. WATSON

Volume VIII.

JANUARY to JUNE 1899

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY
1899

All rights reserved

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME VIII

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1899

A Black-Letter Day ..... *Eden Phillpotts* 167
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. LEY PETHYBRIDGE

A Breviary of Dogges ..... *F. H. H. Guillemard* 620

A Day on a Moorland Trout Stream ..... *Russell Richardson* 651
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED B. RICHARDSON

A Day with the Stag-Hounds at Fontainebleau
The Hon. Mrs. Rowley 28
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAUD U. CLARKE

A Driving Tour in Corsica ..... *George J. Goschen, jun., M.P.* 155
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LADY EVELYN GOSCHEN AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

A Shooting Expedition in Baltistan ..... *Lady Westmacott* 197
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ST. CLAIR SIMMONS

A Visit to the Transvaal ..... *M. Burton Durham* 315

An Old Posting Road ..... *John Bluett* 382

Bad Shots ..... *Percy Stephens* 370
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. S. WILSON

Big Game Shooting. See 'Stalking on a Ross-shire Grouse Moor,' 'A Shooting Expedition in Baltistan,' 'The Luck of the One-horned Elk,' 'First Impressions of Deer-Stalking,' 'My Elephant,' 'Our Sailors at Play.'

Birds of an Irish Lough, The ..... *G. H. Storer, F.Z.S.* 632
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

British Aviary, The ..... *Alexander Innes Shand* 546
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. G. KEULEMANS

Cricket. See 'Thoughts on Spectators.'

Cycling. See 'Cycling in Shetland.'

Cycling in Shetland ..... *Miss Barbara F. Wylie* 493
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. WILLIAMSON

325190

DEVELOPMENT OF FOX-HUNTING, THE .....*C. E. A. L. Rumbold* 104
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY G. H. JALLAND

DRIVING. See 'A Driving Tour in Corsica,' 'An Old Posting Road.'

EARLY HISTORY OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION, THE .....*R. G. Graham* 75

EXPERIENCES OF A FRENCH SHOOTING ESTATE .....*J. Gordon* 130
WITH ILLUSTRATION BY J. G. KEULEMANS AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

FICTION. See 'Rimini del Capella,' 'Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.,' 'The Ordeal of the Spear,' 'Wanjee,' 'The Major and the Bull,' 'The Moonlight Trial: a Story of the Poona Pony Derby,' 'The Priest's Pool,' 'The Honourable John,' 'The Pretenders,' 'Lady Mabel's Salmon.'

FIELDS AND FOOTLIGHTS .....*Nutcombe Gould* 345
WITH ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY STANNARD, R.B.A.

FIGURE-SKATING COMPETITIONS .....*Edgar Syers* 47
WITH ILLUSTRATION BY LUCIEN DAVIS

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DEER-STALKING
The Hon. A. E. Gathorne-Hardy 608
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LANCELOT SPEED

FISHING. See 'A Black-Letter Day,' 'Trout-Fishing on the Nipigon,' 'Spinning for Thames Trout,' 'Free Fishing in a Fair Island,' 'A Day on a Moorland Trout Stream.'

FOOTBALL. See 'The Early History of the Football Association,' 'The Season's Football.'

FREE FISHING IN A FAIR ISLAND .....*W. K. Robertson* 505
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

GOLF AND GOLFERS .....*H. S. C. Everard* 274
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

GOLFING. See 'Golf and Golfers,' 'Women's Golf.'

HUNTING. See 'A Day with the Stag-Hounds at Fontainebleau,' 'The Development of Fox-Hunting,' 'A Visit to the Transvaal.'

HUNTING THE GREENLAND SEAL .....*Arthur P. Silver* 532
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

LADY MABEL'S SALMON .....*Captain the Hon. R. C. Drummond* 678
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANK FELLER

LUCK OF THE ONE-HORNED ELK, THE .....*Gerard Ferrand* 255
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR AND E. NEALE

MAJOR, THE, AND THE BULL.....*A. G. Bradley* 237
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. M. BROCK

MOONLIGHT TRIAL, THE: A STORY OF THE POONA PONY DERBY
Major Hamylton Fairleigh 288
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DOROTHY HARDY

MY ELEPHANT .....*Captain W. R. Bindloss* 644
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

NOTES BY 'RAPIER' 112, 232, 351, 465, 587, 692

ON EXTEMPORISED SLEIGHS ..... *Miss Frances J. Erskine* 212
WITH ILLUSTRATION FROM PHOTOGRAPH AND DIAGRAMS

ON THE EDGE OF THE BANK ..... *Harold Bindloss* 142
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. MACFARLANE

ORDEAL OF THE SPEAR, THE ..... *Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell, F.S.G.S.* 119
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

OUR SAILORS AT PLAY:
I. Riding 402
II. Shooting 669
Lieutenant Stuart D. Gordon, R.N.
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HARINGTON BIRD AND G. H. JALLAND

PRETENDERS, THE ..... *W. B. Maxwell* 478
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DOROTHY HARDY

PRIEST'S POOL, THE ..... *K. A. Wardropp* 355
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. M. BROCK

RACING. See 'Racing, Past and Future,' 'Some German and Russian Studs,' 'Some Berkshire Training Stables.'

RACING, PAST AND FUTURE ..... *Alfred E. T. Watson* 15
WITH ILLUSTRATION BY G. H. JALLAND AND FROM PHOTOGRAPH

RIDING. See 'Our Sailors at Play.'

RIMINI DEL CAPELLA ..... *Guy Cadogan Rothery* 1
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY TREVOR HADDON

SABLE SLUMP, THE ..... *L. H. De Visme Shaw* 515
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LANCELOT SPEED

SEASON'S FOOTBALL, THE ..... *Captain Philip Trevor* 423

SHOOTING. See 'Experiences of a French Shooting Estate,' 'A Visit to the Transvaal,' 'Fields and Footlights,' 'Bad Shots,' 'The Sable Slump,' 'The Birds of an Irish Lough,' 'Our Sailors at Play.'

SKATING. See 'Figure-Skating Competitions.'

SLEIGHING. See 'On Extemporised Sleighs.'

SOME BERKSHIRE TRAINING STABLES ..... *Miss Maud Umfreville Clarke* 451
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.:
No. IV. The Waters of Strife 57
No. V. Lisheen Races, Second-hand 177
No. VI. Philippa's Fox-hunt 326
No. VII. A Misdeal 434
No. VIII. The Holy Island 567
No. IX. The Policy of the Closed Door 591
E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE

SOME GERMAN AND RUSSIAN STUDS ..... *F. Wrench* 88
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

SPINNING FOR THAMES TROUT ..... *W. Payne Collier* 413
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANK FELLER

STALKING ON A ROSS-SHIRE GROUSE MOOR ..... *Arthur Lavington* 38
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LANCELOT SPEED

THE HONOURABLE JOHN ..... *Arthur Scaife* 387
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY TREVOR HADDON

THOUGHTS ON SPECTATORS ..... *W. J. Ford* 527

TROUT-FISHING ON THE NIPIGON ..... *The Hon. J. N. Kirchhoffer* 302
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ST. CLAIR SIMMONS

WANJEE ..... *L. H. De Visme Shaw* 218
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. M. BROCK

WOMEN'S GOLF ..... *Mrs. Mackern* 397

YACHTING. See 'On the Edge of the Bank.'

THE

BADMINTON MAGAZINE

January 1899

RIMINI DEL CAPELLA

BY GUY CADOGAN ROTHERY

'WHO is this Rimini del Capella?'

'What! Never heard of Rimini? My dear sir, he is the most renowned of our bandits: a man whose fame must surely have travelled over Europe? Not only has he "silenced" his three or four men, but he has been out in the mountains for a quarter of a century or more; altogether he is a splendid fellow.'

So said M. Augustino Garoni, dapper official of the Préfecture, as he and his English acquaintance sat outside the Café Roi Jérôme at Ajaccio. He grew quite enthusiastic over the subject, puffing at his cigarette and thumping the little iron table.

'Are those the proper qualifications for a guide?' and Francis Grey elevated his eyebrows and stroked his blonde moustache.

'Who could possibly have a better knowledge of the country, the haunts of wild beasts?'

'No doubt there is much truth in that; but is there not some chance of this fine gentleman taking his own pay or placing a fancy price on my poor carcase?'

'I said bandit, Monsieur, not brigand. Our bandits are not thieves.'

'Well, Monsieur Garoni, if you, as an official, can so highly recommend Rimini, I suppose it's all right. When can you introduce me to your friend?'

'Scarcely my friend, Monsieur Grey,' said the official, with a deprecatory shrug. 'Of course I do not know where he is; but if you tell the shepherds of Roccailia that you want him to organise a boar hunt, he will soon be at your service.'

Grey was immensely tickled at the notion of an executive authority recommending an outlaw as a trustworthy sporting guide or gillie. However, as a few days previously he had been told by a retired police officer of high rank that the best way to plant an avenue of trees on a hired estate was to dig a series of big holes, and then, under cover of night, transplant suitable saplings from the adjacent Government reserve, he was not greatly astonished by the latest manifestation of how things are managed in Corsica.

Early on the following morning, Francis Grey left Ajaccio in a rickety old 'diligence,' a conveyance which created far more noise and racket than its progress along the broad, well-kept roads warranted. He alighted at Bastellica, a quaint and picturesque mountain village, once renowned in the troubled chronicles of the island, and continued his journey on foot. If Bastellica seemed a dead-and-alive place, Roccailia was even worse. A desolate hamlet, composed of some half-dozen stone-built houses, perched on the steep sides of a dark and gloomy torrent gorge. Grey, being in search of sport rather than the amenities of civilisation, was not altogether displeased by the aspect of affairs. The grim mountain peaks, dense black forests, and deep ravines along which noisy brooks tumbled impetuously over half-sunken rocks, partly clothed with a luxurious growth of ferns and purple cyclamen, promised good sport. Certainly trout should be found in those torrents, partridges and hares in that dense undergrowth, and in imagination he could see the timid mountain sheep scuttling over the craggy heights.

As he approached the hamlet, a few children came running out, scrutinising the stranger with wide-eyed curiosity. One of the boldest of the small fry shyly acted as guide to Baldassare Caponi's house. As befitted his rank of deputy-major, Caponi dwelt in one of the largest houses, which somewhat resembled a block-house in a far-off corner of the work-a-day world.

Caponi received his visitor graciously; but Grey was considerably puzzled by the evident fact that he had been expected and his errand fully understood. Yet a letter could scarcely have preceded him, and the telegraph lines had long been left behind. Yes, Caponi had no doubt that Rimini could be communicated with through the shepherds. Certainly he was the best of guides, the most successful of hunters. They would see what could be

SCATTERING DOGS AND BEATERS IN THEIR MAD STAMPEDE

done the next day. Meanwhile, Roccailia felt honoured by the august presence of so distinguished a son of Albion.

Grey was aware that his advent had created a certain commotion in the village, and that more than one bare-legged urchin had scampered off into the forest after hurried consultations with one or other members of the deputy-major's household. Probably, he thought, they mean to prepare for a wild-boar hunt. But his ambition was set on stalking the mouflon; he had no time for the trivial triumph of 'potting' piggy. And so he told his host.

'Mouflon you want, Monsieur, and mouflon you shall have, but we must wait to hear what Rimini says, and meantime amuse ourselves with boar.'

The whole countryside was on the move, and Grey could almost imagine himself witnessing the preparations for a seventeenth-century barony wolf-hunt in dour Scotland. Beaters of all sizes and ages had tramped out miles away, and, forming a semicircle, were trudging in towards the village, their progress betrayed by waving boughs and occasional shouts. As the semicircle grew narrower, and beaters came into closer contact, a prodigious hubbub arose, men and boys yelling and dogs barking. Leisurely Caponi had posted Grey behind a clump of trees commanding the head of a ravine, he and a few of the big-wigs taking other stations of vantage along a narrow pathway. Before them lay a wide stretch of country, thickly clothed with arbutus, heather, and dwarf oaks, pine forests filling in the background. A great agitating wave swept over the scrub, bushes swaying to and fro as the line of beaters grew narrower and narrower. Occasionally a great uproar burst out, a kind of 'view halloo,' as men and dogs espied a retreating porker. Watching the curious scene, Grey was startled by a sharp report on his right; the next moment a great tusker came crashing up the ravine through the brush. A steady aim, a touch on the trigger, and the huge monster dropped on his knees and rolled over. Another report further down the pathway, and then two remaining pigs, fearing to face the line of fire, charged back, scattering dogs and beaters in their mad stampede. The beasts were easily seen as they rushed over rocks, but Grey refrained from firing, with the beaters so close to the quarry. Not so Caponi and his friends, however, who opened a vigorous fusillade, bringing down one more pig; doing no further damage than killing a dog.

Laid out on the pathway, the four porkers looked formidable. Quickly poles were cut, the boars' legs tied together, and, the beasts being slung on the poles, beaters and hunters formed a

triumphal procession back to the village. There high revels were held, every inhabitant being plenteously regaled on the unwonted fare. A day well spent, bringing promise of better things for the future.

When Grey came down the next morning for early breakfast, Caponi was conversing with a tall man, whose dark, closely shaven face and fine features betrayed considerable refinement.

'Let me present you, Monsieur Grey. Rimini del Capella, who promises you at least a couple of mouflon.'

'That is, if Monsieur is as good a shot as his clear eyes and quick glance would make me hope.'

Rimini spoke with polished ease, and, as he stretched forth his long, thin hand, Grey forgot all about the man's rough costume of shaggy brown homespun, his reputation of having slain his brace and a-half of fellow-creatures, and was only conscious of meeting a singularly engaging specimen of the *homme du monde.* As a matter of fact, del Capella belonged to one of the old families of the island, had been to college and won some renown at the University of Montpelier, before 'little differences' with the Government representatives in Corsica had induced him to seek a home amidst mountain glen and dark forest.

Promptly the two men agreed to a plan of campaign. Unlike wild pigs, the mouflon requires to be stalked as patiently and with as little noise as possible. Rimini and Grey would be off to the trackless mountain ranges, and taking up their quarters in some lonely shepherd hut, or perchance a rocky cavern, pass their days in following up the timid sheep. They would have no companions, not even dogs.

As matters turned out, however, they were not so lonely in their exile as they had anticipated. Twelve miles from Roccailia the hunters came upon a valley, thick with luscious grass, hemmed in by tall mountains. Close under the rugged cliff was a small habitation, consisting partly of natural cavern, and partly of a stone-built lean-to. Within a few yards of this were several large pens with 'ring fences' of clay masonry. It was a shepherd settlement, and Grey acknowledged that no better head-quarters could be desired. After some days' rough work in the mountains, he was absolutely certain of the fact; for, coming back tired out after a day's practically fruitless wanderings, he was charmed by the unassuming courtesy of his shepherd host, the silent, ever-watchful attentions of the shepherd's sister.

Marta Gaffari was a beauty in her way, but Grey was chiefly impressed by her calm dignity and graceful carriage. Taciturn,

THE HUNTERS GOT FAIRLY WITHIN RANGE

like most Corsicans, yet she showed no marked disinclination for conversation, and, though sober of language herself, seemed fully to sympathise with her guest's occasional poetic rhapsodies anent the beauties of nature as seen in this wild spot. Her manifold duties as hostess, cook, and dairymaid were fulfilled without fuss; indeed, she found time to clean del Capella's gun and would have done the same for Grey had he permitted it.

One day del Capella had planned a long expedition to a somewhat distant valley. They had started early, and had been rewarded after hours of weary tramping by sighting a herd of half a dozen mouflon. Keeping under shelter of rocks and bushes as best they could, the two men stalked the sheep, first shifting their position in order to get to leeward—a not too easy task, for they were browsing on a mountain side, cropping the grass between boulders, and the ram, with its shaggy coat and great curved horns, stood on the highest part of the slope, constantly interrupting his feed to take a comprehensive survey. Nevertheless, with patience—though not without considerable bruising of wrists and shins—the hunters got fairly within range. Del Capella had whispered:

'Monsieur, take the ram, he has magnificent horns. I will try for a kid; it will be good to eat.'

The two reports rang out almost simultaneously, and Grey had the satisfaction of seeing his ram collapse without a struggle. A good shot, though the animal standing up as sentinel afforded an easy mark. Del Capella's shot had also done its work; but, though he instantly sprang up and discharged his second barrel, the two dams and remaining kids had bolted over rocks and disappeared with marvellous rapidity. Grey naturally wished to follow.

'Quite useless; no chance of approaching them for some days to come,' said Rimini.

With businesslike alacrity the Corsican set to work securing their game. While thus engaged, the two men were startled by the sound of approaching footsteps. Looking up, they saw Marta running towards them. She was flushed and hot, but by no means out of breath with her long run, and Grey looked at her with undisguised admiration while she jabbered away excitedly with Rimini.

'We must make haste, Monsieur, the gendarmes are after us!'

'But, my dear fellow, what on earth does that matter? We are doing no wrong.'

'Monsieur forgets that I have been in the Macchi for some

years, and it is unlawful to give such as me any help. It would go hard with Marta if we were arrested now; but, of course, it would not affect a foreigner.'

'Perhaps, Monsieur,' and Marta looked up shyly, the red blood mantling under her brown skin, 'had better leave us here. We can easily show you how to find your way back to our hut.'

'What! leave you in the lurch?'

Grey was indignant at such an idea, and declared he would stick to his gillie, no matter what might come of it. Rimini suggested that they should all three make as rapid a retreat as possible to one of the higher mountains, and that then Marta should leave them to return leisurely to her brother, while Grey might quietly enjoy a few days' pigeon-shooting before retracing his steps to Ajaccio. Hastily cutting a couple of hams, and removing the magnificent horns for Grey, Rimini concealed the remainder of the carcases and started off with big strides, bidding the others to follow him. It was exceedingly rough work, and not very pleasant to the Englishman, for he did not like the notion of running away from the police. 'This is what comes of listening to a grinning idiot of a Préfecture clerk,' thought he savagely. 'Why the deuce did I take his advice and select a bandit as shikari?' A distant but sharp report brought the three fugitives to a standstill. Turning round, they saw two men in blue on the crest of a hill, and a small puff of smoke close by one of them. They were the gendarmes.

'We must make haste, or they will soon be within range. Let us hope they are not able to recognise us.'

The game was getting exciting, and Grey did not wish to be outdone by Rimini or a slight Corsican damsel, so he put his best foot foremost, dashing over the ground regardless of slips and contusions. For a time the men in blue seemed to gain upon them, as they were traversing comparatively smooth grass-land; but as soon as they reached the rougher ground their human prey made greater headway, and by sundown the minions of the law had long been out of sight.

'Courage,' said Rimini; 'a few steps further and we shall reach a forest where we can safely rest for the night.'

It was quite dark when they entered a dense wood of gigantic pine-trees, and they had some difficulty in pushing forward. Suddenly they came across a grand mass of isolated rocks.

'We can stay here for the night,' and Rimini cautiously made his way round the enormous erratic boulders. 'Here is a cavern.'

RIMINI SUDDENLY THREW HIMSELF FLAT ON THE GROUND

Quickly a few dried sticks were gathered among the loose stones, and set alight. Grey was then able to see that the rocks, some twelve or fifteen feet high, lay tossed together in such a way as to form a very large cavern. Meanwhile, Rimini and his companion had gathered more wood, and set to work preparing one of the mouflon hams for roasting, the bandit explaining that by carefully choosing the wood they could have a good fire without too much flame or smoke. Both men had flasks full of native brandy, and, as a stream was near by, an enjoyable meal was made, after which the girl retired to the cavern, and the two men lay down by the fire to smoke their pipes. There was no moon, but the night was clear and the sky ablaze with myriads of stars. Grey, though inclined to quarrel with fate, felt the soothing influence of the time and locality steal over him as he lay looking up at the waving tree-tops and at the rugged brown rocks; listening to the endless mysterious sounds of forest life he dropped off to sleep. It was barely daylight when Rimini awoke him and made signs for silence. The bandit had extinguished the fire, Marta was busily covering up the ashes with stones and rubbish.

'We must be off, but cautiously; our enemies are close at hand.'

They crept silently away. Rimini, however, suddenly threw himself flat on the ground amidst ferns, making signs to the others to follow his example. Not a moment too soon, for the two gendarmes appeared on the scene a few paces off, and carefully examined the rocks and cavern. The three fugitives could see everything they did and hear every word they said, and to Grey's disgust it was evident that the sergeant knew perfectly well who the three runaways were, and was eager to make a capture. Having completed their search, the gendarmes looked about them, declaring that their prey must be close at hand, and then started off due south.

As soon as they were out of sight, Rimini sat up, and a council of war was held. He said the best thing for them all to do was to make for the coast, find a boat, and set sail for Sardinia, where they might remain for a time before venturing back to the island, while Grey might go to Cagliari and there take steamer for Marseilles. He said that M. Garoni would smooth over matters and send his English friend's belongings from Ajaccio. Grey did not half like the scheme, but he felt himself in a devil of a hole, not caring to abandon Rimini or that most captivating maiden; so, somewhat sullenly, he gave his

consent to the plans. Once more the small party commenced their flight, disagreeably hastened about mid-day by the sudden appearance of their pursuers. About three o'clock, quite fagged out, they reached the shore, and Rimini led the way to a small hamlet, where they discovered a fisherman. But this worthy appeared rather obdurate, and when Rimini became insistent, and two gendarmes hove in sight on the top of a hill some two miles away, he consented, but only after Grey agreed to pay him some three hundred francs in cash, and gave him a cheque for a further sum of three thousand francs. Of course, £132 was a big price to pay, but Grey was driven into a corner, and pay it he did. The voyage to Sardinia was uneventful. Rimini and Marta went to stay in a small village, while Grey hurried to Cagliari, caught the steamer, and was soon back at Ajaccio. He, however, deemed it best not to land, and so sent a private message to M. Garoni, who speedily made his appearance, bringing with him his friend's *impedimenta*. The dapper official was horrified to hear how matters had ended, and was quite indignant at the unworthy conduct of the Corsican boatman. He was profuse in apologies until the steamer left. When he had gone, a French officer began talking about peculiar insular customs. He said Corsicans were very clannish, and seemed to be all more or less related to each other, even the biggest swells having cousins who were tillers of the soil, hewers of wood, and drawers of water.

'For instance, take our good friend, Monsieur Garoni, one of the best men and highly connected; well, he is a cousin of Rimini del Capella, the bandit; another cousin, Caponi, is Mayor of Roccailia, another is a shepherd; then there are more cousins, the Brunelliti, who are fisherfolk, and Sergeant Vitello, who professes to have just returned from hunting Rimini, is his uncle.'

As Grey thought over the coincidences of his sporting trip, he became pensive, and finally philosophically decided that Corsica and Corsicans are undoubtedly most interesting, though their study at close quarters might prove an expensive hobby.

RACING, PAST AND FUTURE

BY ALFRED E. T. WATSON

A FEW weeks hence one thing is certain to happen: we shall begin to hear stories of two-year-olds that have shown wonderful speed, and can, in fact, all but 'catch pigeons,' as the phrase used to run; and it may be confidently anticipated that the majority of these stories will prove in time to be ludicrously incorrect. Ormathwaite was going to carry all before him, it was rumoured not long since; then there was Boniface and some dozen others were talked about who are still maidens, showing that it behoves the judicious to receive legends of 'flyers' with a very great deal of caution. It is, in truth, quite soon enough to judge of a horse's capacity when he has run several races, and even then not to be too sure that the judgment is correct. The lesson is annually enforced a good many times over. Take Isinglass for example. After having won his first race at Newmarket, he went to Ascot and secured the New Stakes in the handsomest fashion; but people would not recognise that he was a really good horse, and in the Middle Park Plate there were three better favourites, and two equal with him at the same odds of 10 to 1. Actually 10 to 1 Isinglass, and 7 to 4 Dame President! Raeburn stood at 8 to 1; Le Nicham and Royal Scot were the other equal chances with Mr. McCalmont's famous colt.

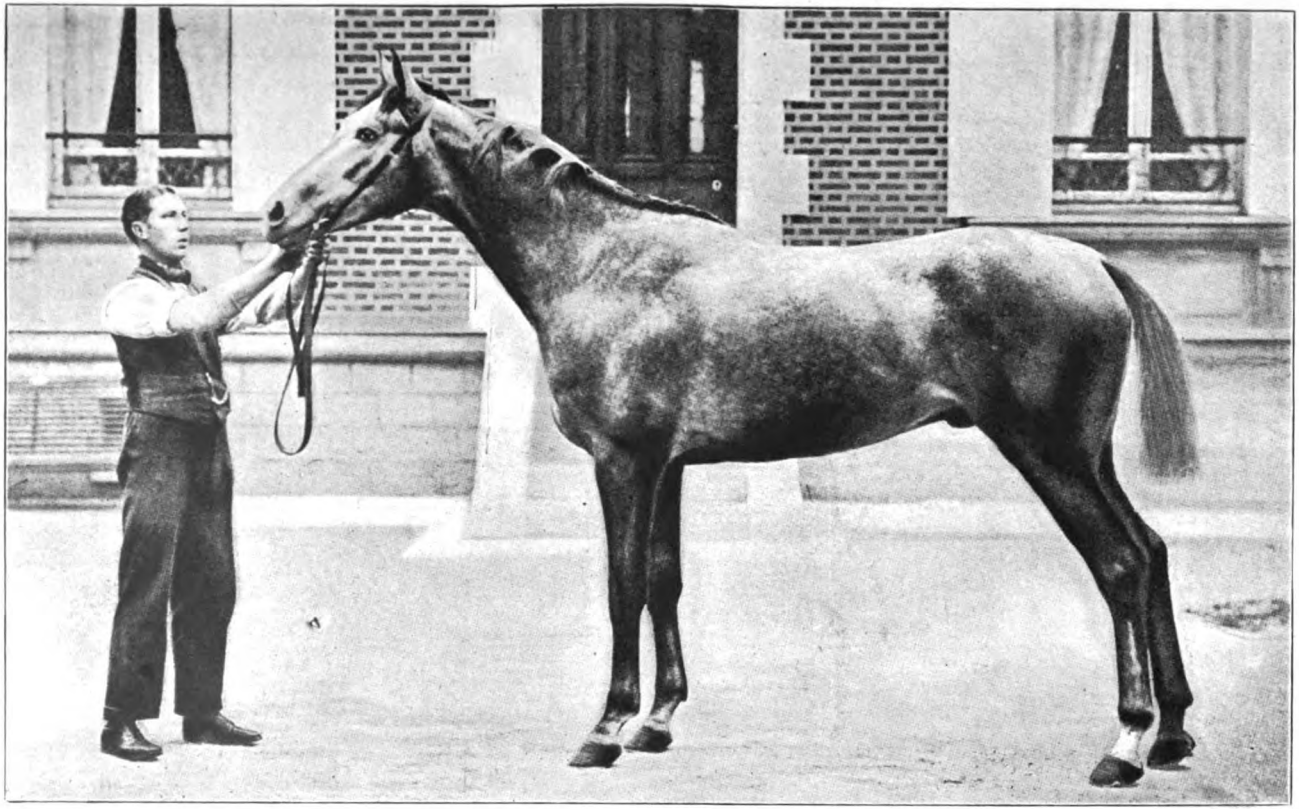
It becomes evident, therefore, that an attempt to sum up last year's form and draw deductions from it may lead one far astray; mainly, perhaps, because that question of staying is so all-important, and is one on which a two-year-old's performances really throw little light. The T.Y.C. at Ascot is eighty-four yards short of six furlongs, and, as most people are aware, it finishes at the top of a steep ascent. It is, in fact, a severe course; and it

might be supposed that a two-year-old which won over it would assuredly 'get' a reasonable distance, that he would, indeed, be something of a stayer. Frequent experience proves the contrary. More than this, indeed: we find non-stayers winning the Dewhurst Plate over the exceedingly trying seven furlongs of the Rowley Mile, Le Nord and Racontcur to wit.

Many readers will remember the faith entertained by numbers of good judges that Bumptious and Peter Flower both held great chances for the Derby. And so they would have done if the distance had been six furlongs instead of twelve. Who doubted that Surefoot stayed when they saw him run as a two-year-old, and, in further confirmation of my warning not to judge too soon, again when they saw him win the Two Thousand? Last year one read again and again that the style in which Dieudonné won the Middle Park Plate showed that he was a stayer, a belief I personally altogether declined to share, and argued against in these pages.

When we are trying to find out what will win the Derby, therefore—and that is one great object of reviewing the past racing season—we really have a very insecure basis from which to discuss the subject. Let us see what, if all goes well with them, are likely to start. The Duke of Westminster will have a representative in Flying Fox (Orme—Vampire), with Frontier (Orme—Quetta) to fall back on in case of need, and it is possible that Kingsclere may also send Mr. W. Low's Mark For'ard (Rightaway—Hall Mark). Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's blue jacket will be carried by St. Gris (Galopin—Isabel); and his Trident (Ocean Wave—Lady Loverule) is also entered. I think it is ascertained that Trident is not likely to last over a mile and a half—at least, Mr. Leopold de Rothschild was good enough to tell me that up to five furlongs there was little or nothing between the two, but beyond that distance St. Gris had matters his own way. Desmond (St. Simon—L'Abbesse de Jouarre), Wild Irishman (Melanion—Irish Stew), Galliot (Galopin—Agave), North Britain (Melanion—Elspeth), Holocauste (Le Sancy—Bougie) are engaged, as are animals of less account, as I rate them, in Hougoumont (Sir Hugo—La Crosse Dorée), the dark colt Sandringham (St. Simon—Perdita II., own brother to Persimmon and Florizel II., who may be the best or worst horse in training, and again may not stand a preparation); and there are a couple of fillies with some pretensions to form in Victoria May and Lady Ogle.

Horses very often 'come on' and show great improvement after their first season. We have seen notable cases of this lately



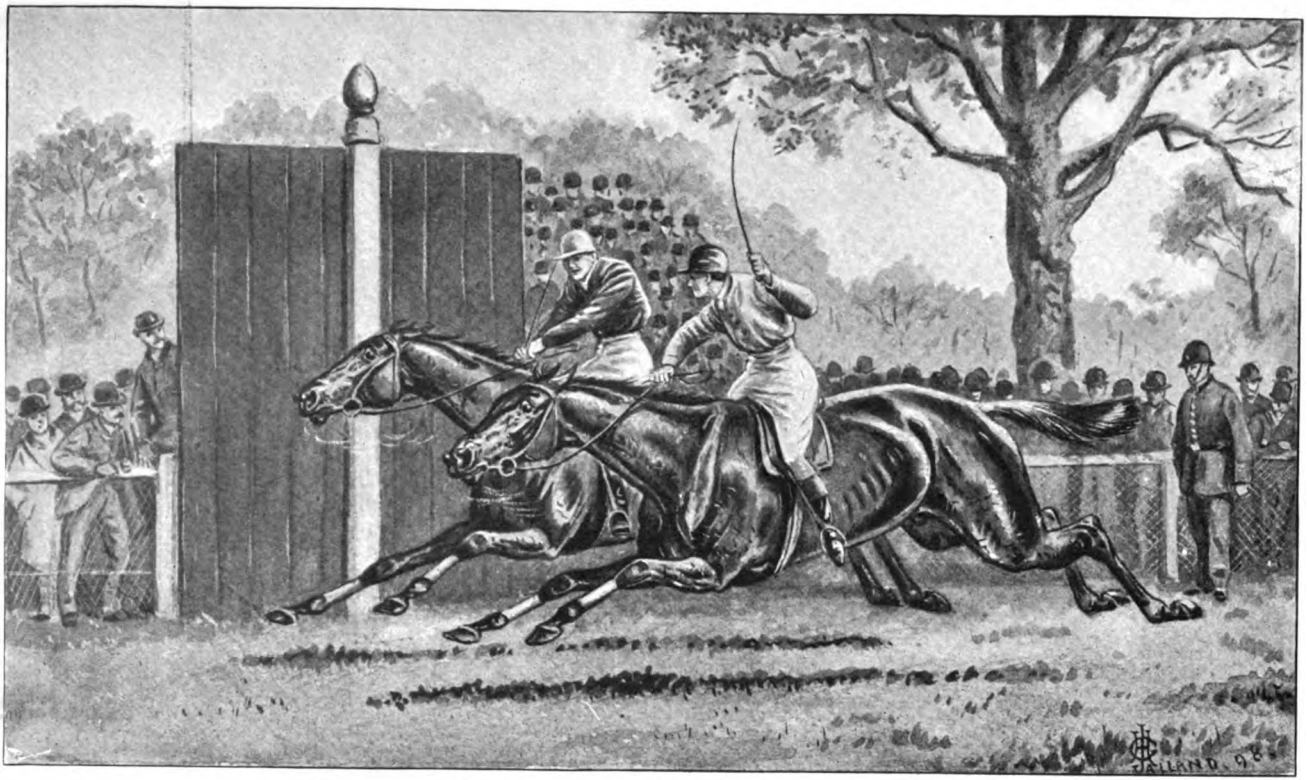
HOLOCAUSTE

in Morion, Memoir, St. Gatien, Victor Wild, Chaleureux, and others that will at once occur to the reader. No one could have inferred from the two-year-old performances of these animals that they would ever make big names for themselves, and, in fact, it never does to be too certain about anything in racing; but to all appearance the present three-year-olds can only be very moderate indeed. Flying Fox justified his private reputation by winning his race first at Ascot; but Musa, who was very near in at the finish, did not get well away, had bad luck, it was said, in the course of the race, and, though there was the excuse for Flying Fox that he ran somewhat green the first time out, one could not regard him as anything in the nature of a flyer. That he was not so, indeed, subsequent events proved. He was beaten by St. Gris at Kempton, only by a head, it is true, and he was giving away three pounds; moreover, the head was such a short one that several friends of the Duke of Westminster, who were standing near him at the winning-post, prematurely congratulated him on the victory of his colt. At Newmarket later on Flying Fox disposed of St. Gris without an effort; but here again it was thought that Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's horse was not at his best, and meantime Flying Fox had gone down before Caiman. Caiman's form was by no means remarkable apart from his victory in the Middle Park Plate, and a comprehensive view of the subject certainly does not make Flying Fox out to be a good horse. Yet, if he is not to win the Derby, who is? The Kingsclere second string Frontier must have been very backward when he ran at Sandown, for he proved himself a vastly better animal in the Dewhurst Plate, and is a very improving sort. On the whole, in this moderate year, Kingsclere certainly looks dangerous.

Desmond has not maintained his position during the season. There is a doubt about his staying, and, as I have mentioned in these pages before, another grave doubt about his hocks. Lord Dunraven was so careful not to run him when the ground was hard, that it is reasonable to suppose the son of St. Simon and L'Abbesse de Jouarre is recognised as by no means the soundest of the sound. Wild Irishman is a son of Melanion, whose stock are shifty or bad-tempered for the most part, and very seldom train on. Tom Cannon, I know, was heartily glad to get rid of the horse, of whom he had at first entertained the highest possible opinion, and I doubt this colt's ability to stay. North Britain comes into the same category. Galliot is likely to win races, and he ran well in the autumn behind Caiman, who afterwards so unexpectedly distinguished

himself; but there seem great doubts as to whether Galliot should be rated as anywhere near the first class. M. de Brémond has entered Holocauste, the grey son of Le Sancy, a sire of whom I have a very high opinion, as his sons and daughters both stay and go fast. The French three-year-olds last year were probably, almost certainly indeed, superior to ours; but at the same time, sound judges in France, who had better tests of comparison than we can apply, regarded them as a good deal under the average, and we may be apt just at present to overrate French horses. Holocauste is criticised by French experts from various points of view, but on the whole he certainly seems to have a very reasonable chance of success at Epsom, where a grey winner would be altogether a novelty. Victoria May and Lady Ogle may be worth mention; but there is the oft-quoted fact that since the Derby was instituted in the year 1780, only three fillies have won it—though, by the way, a fourth, in La Flêche, came exceedingly near to doing so. Victoria May, however, is, I am convinced, an absolute non-stayer. Lady Ogle may turn out a better animal than people imagine, and if she goes on well it is not at all unlikely she will win good races. She is a very delicate-constitutioned mare, and seems to lose stones in weight after a race, or even after a gallop. Probably no animal in Newmarket has been trained so lightly and cautiously, her work having rarely consisted of more than a canter; but if she only picks up a little stamina, she undoubtedly has speed, and is a great fine mare that might be anything. I am far, however, from suggesting that she is at all likely to win the Derby, which, from the above remarks, it will be seen, looks, in my opinion, like falling to the better of the Kingsclere horses, unless it goes to France by the aid of Holocauste. A friend in Paris who writes to me constantly about racing in France, and is one of the very best judges I know, tells me, however, that on the whole the more he thinks about Holocauste the less he likes him, though my friend seems to waver a little in his verdict and will not absolutely pronounce against the possibility of the son of Le Sancy turning out a good horse.

A lengthy review of the past season's racing would not be very interesting, for it is a tale for the most part of surprises and disappointments. It has come to be accepted as an article of faith that the Brocklesby field is usually very moderate. As Lord Suffolk—it is impossible to write his name without a pang of sorrow and regret—remarked in the Racing Book of the Badminton Library, 'The later and best two-year-old of any year, the



A SHORT HEAD

winner of the Middle Park Plate, for instance, is generally about two stone in front of the good early form.' That was written in 1885. Subsequent experience has usually confirmed it, but there are exceptions to every rule, and Amurath, who won last year, though not a good horse, as good horses go, was certainly not very far behind the best of his (highly inferior) season. Desmond too, who ran second, held his own, and with the examples of The Bard and Donovan also before us, it appears that the winner of the Brocklesby may hold his own to the end of the season.

One of the surprises of the Spring, which remains a surprise still, was how Cyllene came to be so hopelessly beaten in the Column Produce Stakes by such a fourth-rate creature as the Scotia filly. A daughter of Senanus would not have been suspected of a capacity of beating anything over the Rowley Mile, even with much advantage of weight; and though Cyllene was doubtless not really 'wound up,' he was believed by all connected with him to be quite forward enough in condition to accomplish the exceedingly moderate task then set him. He proved himself a different animal afterwards, but whether he is anything like a really first-class horse still remains a question.

One of the most unaccountable things about last year's racing was the way in which Disraeli was opposed by the ring before the race for the Two Thousand Guineas. His friends believed him to be, with the possible exception of Cyllene, quite the best of his year, and many of the public must have shared this belief, as is shown by the fact that some days before the event he was backed down to five to one. Considering how much he had against him in the Middle Park Plate—a cough, a stoppage in his work, and a runaway race that would have taken the steel out of any horse—the stable were quite satisfied that he would beat Dieudonné when next they met; and, with all the experience yearly gained of Newmarket touts (clever as many of them are) making egregious mistakes, one would have supposed that the Ring would not have been so greatly influenced by their declarations that the horse went badly in his work; the more so as it was explained in authoritative quarters that he was an animal that by no means ever showed to advantage in his slow paces. One prominent dispenser of information at Newmarket informed his clients that, 'as for Disraeli, he was not good enough to win a selling race at Pontefract;' but he was thoroughly fit and well on the Two Thousand day, and those who should have known most about him thought very highly of his chance, though their confidence was naturally to some extent checked by the singularly persistent

opposition of the bookmakers, and particularly of a few of them. How handsomely he won is a matter of Turf history, and what the Turf world thought of the performance is abundantly proved by the fact that he was backed for the Derby down to six to four. I certainly thought the Derby was one of the best of all possible good things for him, and so I still think it would and should have been. He had never shown any disposition to roguery or cowardice, and was a remarkably good-tempered horse; but on the way from the paddock to the post he got unfortunately upset while passing a gipsy caravan,[1] and neither at Epsom, nor afterwards at Longchamps, when he went to run for the Grand Prix, could he be induced to raise the ghost of a gallop. His bad temper disappeared as autumn approached, but then, unhappily, his leg went. He had hurt it, I believe, in the course of his mad antics in France. That he would have beaten Wild Fowler in the St. Leger had all gone well with him, I think may be accepted as certain from the manner in which, with so much against him, he had beaten Captain Greer's colt under so many disadvantages in the Middle Park Plate, giving him, moreover, 3 lbs. Those who saw the Derby will not soon forget the feeling of surprise that overcame them when it was perceived that Disraeli was hopelessly out of it after half the course had been covered, and when Jeddah, the despised Jeddah, against whom a hundred to one was offered, came out at the distance and beat his field. If Wantage had stood, the result might have been different; but the 'ifs' in racing are the foundations of utterly hopeless, endless, and often foundationless argument. I do not think the friends of Dieudonné had any real confidence in his ability to win. Watts told me that if the distance of the race were five furlongs, he should have fancied the horse greatly, but his anxiety to have it settled that he was to ride Disraeli in the Grand Prix (Mr. Wallace Johnstone having a claim on him) showed conclusively what he thought would happen in the Derby. Though it was not believed that Dieudonné would win, however, it was certainly regarded as beyond doubt that he would beat Jeddah.

Another thing that looks remarkable at the present time is that Archduke II. should have been supposed to have any sort of chance for the great race. Joseph Cannon, I know, did not for a moment expect to win; but the way in which Archduke was backed is ample evidence that in some mysterious way

[1] That is the only suggestion his jockey could offer. He was sold for the absurdly small sum of 850 guineas because he had developed a very bad ring-bone.

belief in the American bred had sprung up. He proved himself to be an exceedingly bad animal, and if ever he wins a race, it will surely be in the very poorest company. His trial with History must have conveyed to lookers-on a vastly different impression from that which it gave to his trainer.

About the fillies there is little to be said. Nun Nicer seems to me one of the several extremely moderate animals that have won the One Thousand Guineas, a race which sometimes falls to an Achievement, to a Formosa, an Apology, a Pilgrimage, a Wheel-of-Fortune, a Busybody, a La Flêche, and sometimes to a Briar-root, a Siffleuse, or a Galeottia. The owner of Airs-and-Graces was always convinced that this cast-off from the Duke of Portland's stable was the better animal, and the Oaks demonstrated that he was right, though the stable estimate of the mare certainly was not so, as she was supposed to have an excellent chance of winning the Jockey Club Stakes, in which she performed very moderately.

It may probably be taken as a fact that Velasquez was not sufficiently forward in condition when he ran for the Princess of Wales' Stakes in the Newmarket July. Walters told me, in fact, as we rode off the Heath after the race, that he had been careful not to get the colt too ripe, as with the Eclipse Stakes in view he was afraid of overdoing him and leaving nothing to work upon; but, evidently, instead of overdoing it he underdid it.

It is melancholy to think that we appear to have no really good horses of any age in training, and that is why last season's moderate crop of two-year-olds, that kept on beating each other as they did, was so great a disappointment. As I observed in my Notes last month, there have often been bad years before, when pessimists have declared that the breed was played out; but after a bad year has frequently come a very good one. Now, unless the unexpected happens, we look like having a sequence of very bad years indeed.

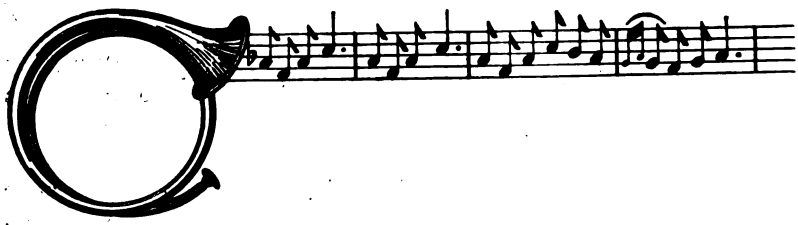
The success of American and Australian bred animals may be at first a little galling to the pride of the firm believer in the English horse, but, on the other hand, these horses are, of course, without exception of English descent, and the infusion of practically new blood, which will result from their arrival in England, should prove of benefit to the stock. It will be interesting to see what the young Carbines do, and it must not be forgotten that if they succeed the credit will recur to the Duke of Beaufort's expatriated horse Musket. Those of them that I have seen are certainly not handsome, but there was no doubt about the merit of Carbine

himself. That good horse has had every chance given him, and we shall soon know what his sons and daughters are like.

Our horses would appear to more advantage as a whole if the paddocks in which the young stock run produced the rich and succulent grasses which are found in Kentucky, Ireland, and elsewhere. Of course, there are good paddocks at many breeding quarters in England, but, on the other hand, there are certainly others which are ill-managed, where the feed is poor and sometimes even rank; many are overcrowded, and the mares and young stock cannot reasonably be expected to thrive on what they find in them.

Another interesting point in the coming season will be to watch what Sloan succeeds in doing. It is impossible not to entertain a great admiration for this jockey's riding, for he has persuaded several horses to win with which certain jockeys have failed to do anything. St. Ia, Kirschwasser, Sea Fog, and others are cases in point. They have gone kindly with Sloan and 'given their running' when they have refused to gallop in other hands. At the same time I do think that he has been on the whole very fortunate in his mounts, and that the great majority of the races he has won would have fallen to the same horses with any fairly competent jockey in the saddle. That he will maintain his average during the coming season seems to me in the highest degree improbable, and those who think they have discovered a road to fortune by blindly following his mounts are likely to discover that fortune does not lie in that direction. His great merit, as I have said, appears to be that some horses go with him when they will not go with some other jockeys; but many of these horses, it must be remembered, have not been ridden by the pick of the profession. The elaborate mathematical calculations about wind pressure strike me as either entirely beside the mark, or at the very best wildly exaggerated; but Sloan is an excellent judge of pace, which is one of the highest gifts of jockeyship, and is keenly observant to see what other horses in the race are doing. The quick glance he throws over his rivals tells him a great deal, as it used to tell Fred Archer, George Fordham, and Tom Cannon, and still tells Mornington Cannon, Watts, T. Loates (who has never ridden so well as during the past year), S. Loates, and other exceptionally competent riders. Sloan also must have excellent hands, though it seems odd that this should be so, considering that he holds his reins within a few inches of the horse's bit. Some suspicious critics also maintain that his average is vastly improved by the fact that he is always trying. My own impres-

sion is that in this respect he gains very little advantage, for the reason that, with the rarest of exceptions, the other jockeys are equally trying too. Sometimes it happens, however, that a jockey who is riding for a certain stable is put on horses that it is well known have no chance of winning. They are run because they are entered. It is necessary to introduce them to a race-course; they are backward in condition; no one expects to see them successful, but they have to get accustomed to racing and to learn their business. Sloan came over late in the season, and there were no horses of this sort for him to ride. He has very rarely been seen on an animal that was not confidently expected to win and was not freely backed. It may be insular, narrow-minded, prejudiced, and the rest of it, but I cannot believe that, generation after generation, jockeys have been sitting on the wrong part of a horse's back, that the best place for the saddle is not where it always has been, and that at the end of the nineteenth century the theory and practice of horsemanship as applied to racing is to be revolutionised.



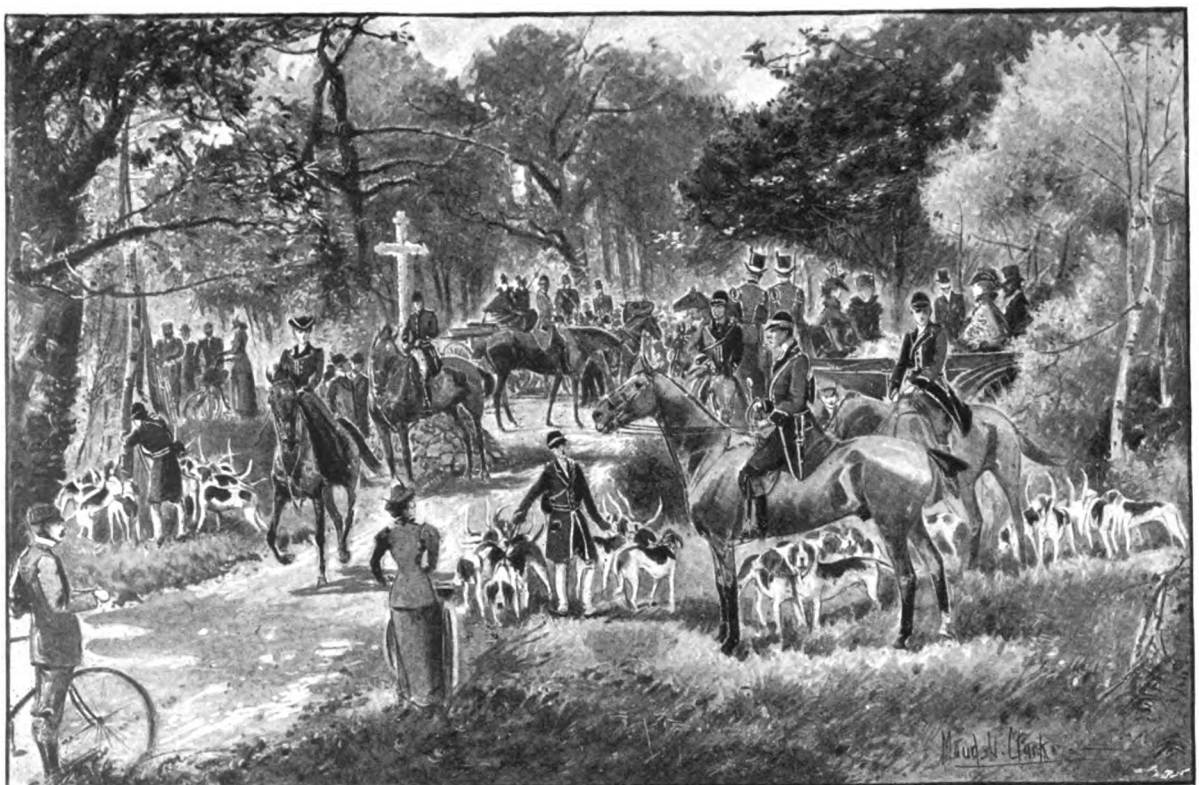
A DAY WITH THE STAG HOUNDS AT FONTAINEBLEAU

BY THE HON. MRS. ROWLEY

THE *rendezvous* was at the Croix de Franchard, some five or six kilometres only from Fontainebleau, but we started early with the intention of breakfasting at the restaurant de Franchard. It was a glorious morning, and the beautiful old palace, with its famous horseshoe staircase, was looking its best; that staircase from which the great Napoleon bade farewell to his Old Guard after signing his abdication.

Let us conjure up a picture of the past: a splendid cortège of gallant noblemen and fair ladies starting to hunt the stag in the royal forest of Fontainebleau. What gorgeous costumes, prancing horses, brilliant equipages! One sees it all in the mind's eye. But the vision fades, and in its place we see two humble bicyclists riding quietly over the well-laid road. Times have changed, it is true, but the forest is still there, and is still tenanted by the descendants of those same stags which the French kings and their followers hunted; and the love of the chase is as strong as then in the human breast.

The heavy rain of last night has loosened the leaves, which are coming down in a golden shower, and there is a perfect hailstorm of horse-chestnuts and acorns. An easy ride of thirty minutes brings us to our restaurant, where we order our mid-day meal, and having stabled our iron steeds, we stroll out to see the famous 'gorges de Franchard.' It is certainly a remarkable spot; a huge rocky basin surrounded with forest; rocks everywhere piled up, with very little green between them. They present a peculiar and somewhat weird appearance just now, owing to the few birches and pines scattered about having been completely blackened by a fire which happened some two years ago. These



A CHARMING PICTURE MEETS OUR SIGHT

forest fires are of pretty frequent occurrence, being caused as a rule by careless visitors.

After returning to our café, and fortifying ourselves with an excellent *déjeuner*, we proceed to the meet. A charming picture meets our sight. In the centre of the circular clearing stands a high stone cross—one of many in the forest, marking the meeting of several roads. In one corner are grouped the hunt servants and the hounds, whilst all around are carriages, horsemen, led horses, bicyclists, and pedestrians, the horsemen consisting to a large extent of officers in uniform.

It is still early, and the chief people have not yet arrived, so we inspect the pack. They are very big, deep-throated hounds, standing about twenty-six inches high, and showing much of the bloodhound about their heads; their ears are not rounded, and some of them are a good deal torn.

What amuses us is that they are all coupled with pieces of rope. Fancy the feelings of an English huntsman! There are at least thirty couple, and they are not a very even lot. The servants consist of the huntsman and two whips, who will be mounted later on—*piqueurs* I believe they are called—and two lads who remain on foot. Their uniform is very picturesque, consisting of a long red coat faced with dark green, and much braided with gold, green velvet breeches and waistcoat, jack boots, and a black and gold cap. The boys wear the same long coats, but have white leggings reaching well above the knees. The huntsman wears a straight knife, rather longer than the regulation bayonet, and all the five of them have the old-fashioned French *cors de chasse* wound round their bodies. Whilst we are taking in these details more people are arriving; some three or four gentlemen in red coats, who, we understand, represent *les maîtres*, for they seem to have more than one master now.

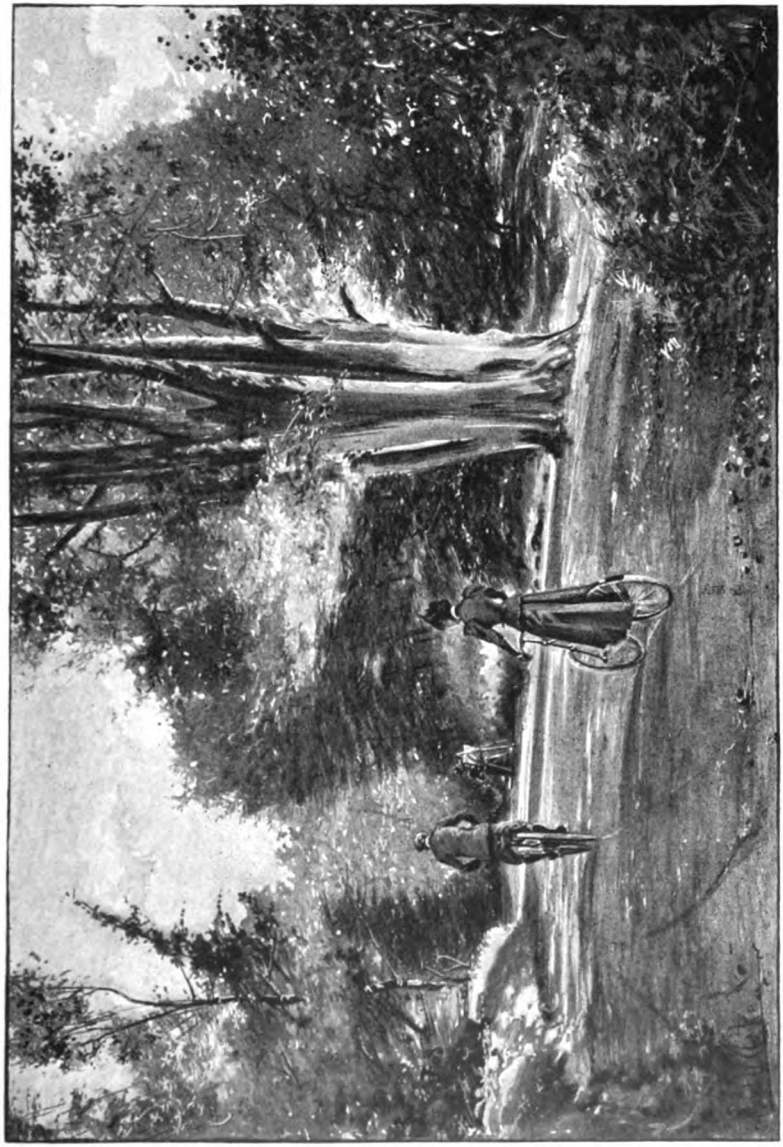
Now other carriages come up, smart pony-phaetons, driven by fashionable ladies; victorias and landaus with magnificent coachmen in peculiar liveries—short tabbed jackets of dark blue cloth with scarlet facings, trimmed with much gold braid and many flat gilt buttons set one above the other in rows, and slightly overlapping, the whole surmounted by a shiny tall black hat. One or two ladies have appeared in habits; one in particular, whom the bystanders speak of as Madame L——, is very handsome, and is strikingly dressed in a tight-fitting scarlet coat, a black skirt, and a most becoming black three-cornered hat trimmed with gold *galon*. She is evidently a very important personage, and is received with much ceremony by the hunt servants.

And now a start is made. Three bunches of hounds, consisting of five couple each, are being tied up to a tree, each bunch left in charge of a boy, whilst the other hounds follow the huntsmen and whips down one of the sandy rides which intersect the entire forest. They may be charming for equestrians, but for bicycles they are quite impossible, so we make a *détour*, and by the time we rejoin them on the Milly road, the majority of the riders, and the few carriages which evidently mean to see something of the fun, are grouped at the entrance of another ride. Here also are the three bunches of hounds tied up to trees and in charge of the lads. I asked one of the latter what these hounds might be. '*Chiens de meute*,' is the reply. But this does not satisfy my curiosity, so I ask what the others are which have gone on. '*Chiens d'attaque*,' is the answer. Now we begin to understand; the first lot no doubt correspond to our 'tufters,' and this is the main pack.

We have a long wait of half an hour, enlivened only by the antics of a horse which a fly is infuriating, and which very nearly succeeds in unseating the young gentleman in the saddle.

At last we hear the deep note of a hound far away. 'Chut!' says somebody with more enthusiasm than the rest; but nobody pays any attention and the chatter continues. We get on our bicycles and ride down the road in the direction of the sound, turning up another ride, not quite so sandy as the last. Now we hear the notes of the horn again, more distinct this time, then the thud of a galloping horse. It is one of the whips riding back for the pack. To our question whether they have found, he gives us a most civil, '*Oui! Suivez la première route à gauche.*' We feel we must be there somehow, so we get on our bikes and flounder along as best we can down a steep and winding road, now obliged to dismount, now scrambling on again, until we catch sight of the red coats; and then we realise there was no great hurry after all, for we have to wait for the pack, which is coming into view down the winding path we have just followed. The hounds are straining at the ropes, and dragging the boys along with them; then the ropes are cut, away stream the hounds, giving splendid tongue with their deep voices, and all the time the horns are playing a curious little tune.

Our progress is soon considerably impeded, for the whole cavalcade sweeps past us up the narrow ride. In a few moments they have all vanished, and we are left to ourselves in the beautiful and now silent forest, with the sunlight streaming



A LADY ARTIST IS PEACEFULLY PAINTING, OBLIVIOUS OF THE CHASE

through the trees and lighting up the white stems of the birches. At a cross-way we draw out our small map and consult as to our best chance of coming up with the hounds again.

Two or three carriages arrive and one belated horseman; he turns up to the right, the carriages go straight on. We decide to follow the rider. It is not easy work pushing a bicycle up a steep incline, over, or rather through, a sandy road; but the top is reached at last, and here we come to another cross-way. A carriage passes across our road, but we are tempted to go straight ahead, as our track has improved and looks more rideable. A few hundred yards of bumping brings us on to a beautiful smooth road along which we fly in the direction of Fontainebleau. We stop in a lonely hollow to rest ourselves and consult our map again. It is so hot that we are half inclined to give up what seems a hopeless pursuit.

But surely that was a hound's note! We strain our ears. Yes! there comes another sound, the faint refrain of the horns. It is behind us. Away we go up the steep hill we have just run so easily down. Once at the top we wait and listen again; but the silence of the forest is rudely disturbed; an automobile is tearing twenty miles an hour down the opposite hill and is preparing to 'spring' our incline. We cannot help being uncharitably pleased at seeing that two out of the three occupants have to jump out before the machine can breast the hill. The motor-car certainly calls for improvement; this one made a noise like a London milk cart, and smelt like a petroleum lamp which has just gone out. However, it is gone now, and once more we can hear the hounds, which are now quite close to us. We must have missed seeing the stag cross the road whilst we were climbing the hill, for after a little delay the hounds pick up the line and dash into the thickets we have just left. So we join the throng and ride back along our bumpy, rutty road.

It is a pretty sight. The first whip looks back as he gallops by and calls out some information which would be of more service if we knew the forest better; but we are pleased at his evident desire that we should see as much sport as possible. But, alas! the roads are too bad for us to keep up, and once more we find ourselves in the exasperating position of being left behind. Still we have seen more than any other bicyclists, and that is always something. We come to the conclusion that we had better make the best of our way back to Franchard, as we had been told that the stag almost always returns at least once to where he was found. Also we have a vague idea that there is

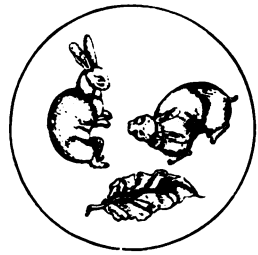
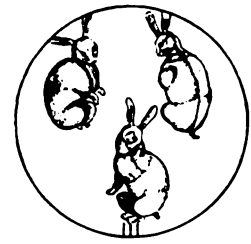
water near the gorge, and we know how few wet spots there are in the forest.

A longish walk brings us back to the Milly high-road, at the exact spot where we had waited so long in the morning.

We turn to the left, determined not to leave the good road any more. At the cross roads we find a good many carriages and foot-people, but they do not seem to know much, so we turn again to the left. By so doing we do not find the hounds, it is true, but we do come into a most lovely part of the forest, where real old beeches rear their splendid heads, and the most exquisite lights are playing through the golden foliage. A lady artist is peacefully painting, oblivious of the chase, and intent only on reproducing the beautiful effects of light and shade. We begin to think that a cup of coffee would be very agreeable, so accordingly we ride quietly back to our restaurant at Franchard, and are ordering our coffee when the *garçon* informs us that the hounds have just gone by, not more than five minutes. Away we go once more—all thoughts of coffee thrown to the winds—back to the original meeting place, and away down a most atrocious paved road. A good many people are about, but we hurry on, and at last meet one of the whips. '*Oui, il est pris, là-bas; tournez à droite,*' which direction we follow, and in a very few minutes find ourselves in the middle of a crowd of excited people, carriages, horses, bicycles, at least two hundred of them. Where they have sprung from it would be hard to say. The covered cart was also in waiting to carry off the remains, and there, surrounded by an admiring circle, was the stag being rapidly and most scientifically skinned and cut up by the huntsman, assisted by the fat driver of the cart. The former had taken off his red coat, and the skill with which he disposed of the beast was most remarkable. A hoof, with strips of hide still attached, was twisted up artistically and put on one side, evidently as a trophy. The haunches, fore-quarters, and sundry choice bits were carefully placed in the cart, and finally the head, which had not been severed from the skin, was laid facing the crowd. He is not a big beast, but carries a fair head, with nine points to his antlers, which are not at all thick. The huntsman now washes his hands at a tap in the cart, resumes his red coat, and receives the congratulations of his friends. '*Il vous en a fait voir, celui-là,*' says one admirer; but the great man only smiles with conscious superiority. The riders meanwhile are beginning to disperse. The ladies have dismounted and are partaking of some refreshments spread out upon the ground. This repast is somewhat disturbed by one of

the old hounds, who quietly walks off with the *pièce de résistance* amidst the laughter of the crowd. Here comes the rain; there is a general scramble to get under way, and we also start home. We regretted afterwards not having stayed for the final scene; for as we ride off we hear in the distance the horns being played in concert over the remains of the stag, a perfect fanfare, which is finally lost in the yellings, snarlings and deep bayings of the great hounds as they fall upon their share of the spoil.

So ends a delightful day, and one which will always remain in the memory. There is no doubt that with an accurate knowledge of the rideable roads of the forest, one would be able to enjoy many a day's sport with the stag hounds of Fontainebleau, mounted on the humble but invaluable bicycle

STALKING ON A ROSS-SHIRE GROUSE MOOR

BY ARTHUR LAVINGTON

A MUGGY morning after a soaking wet night, and the mist lying low down on the hills! Not a cheerful morning for my last day in Ross-shire.

'Well, Ross, is it any use going again to the west end for a deer—it is a bad day for spying, and we saw nothing on our ground yesterday?'

Old Ross, with his long nose and watery eye, is delightful; he has never been south of Inverness, and for twenty-six years has been keeper at this place, living in a little cottage by the river. I can trust him to any extent, and though he must know to a certainty when there is a chance of getting a salmon or a stag, no one is as keen as he is on the most unpromising days. We are great friends.

'I'm thinking Mr. Lavington would be going to the west end to-day, and Jimmie could come with me, as it's too wet on the hill for the grouse. If Mr. Lavington will have his breakfast, me and Jimmie will be going now, and we can spy a "buttie" before Mr. Lavington comes.'

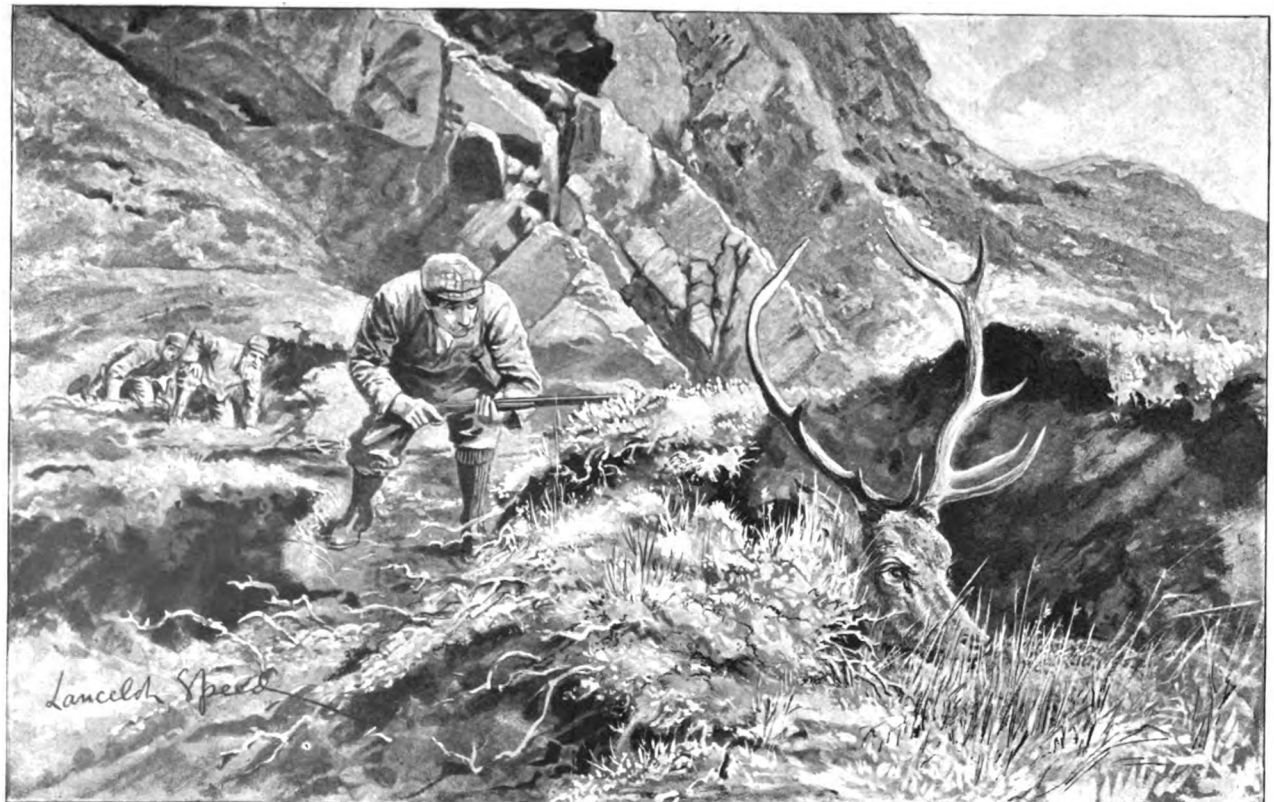
Ross always addresses me like this, in the third person, and it was very confusing when we first met.

'All right then, I'll bring the lunch in the cart, and the rifle,' I said.

'And Mr. Lavington won't forget the cartridges?' says Ross—he always thinks I shall.

An hour or so later I meet Ross and Jimmie at the end of the road, five miles from the house, and we three set out to walk to what we call the west end, which is the end of a long strip of grouse ground marching with a forest.

The mist was just creeping along the hilltops; there was



I CRAWLED CLOSER, UNTIL I WAS NOT MORE THAN A FEW YARDS FROM HIM

hardly a breath of air, but what little there was came from the east and was on our backs; we had to keep a line below the corries in consequence, and the first one, where I had a shot and missed last year, was quite invisible.

The ground was mostly water, as the Irishman said, and the air too for the matter of that; but we trudged on, hoping the mist would lift. Down below we see the river in spate coming down the valley black and silent, with innumerable curves in the flat sandy land; behind us we hear the roar of the falls, where the water dashes down into the rocks and becomes a highland stream again. An hour's walk, and we are near enough to spy the Black Corrie, a very likely place when the wind is west and rough; but to-day it is too warm, and after spying carefully all the deep heather among the rocks right down to the loch at the foot, Ross says 'There's not a thing in it.'

We are now coming to ground where it is necessary to spy carefully, as each hill-side has recollections dear to Ross as to where Mr. So-and-so killed, and where Mr. So-and-so had the 'splendid chance,' which means he missed; but 'not a thing' to-day.

Just before one o'clock we pass through an open birch wood, with very old stunted trees, and several blackgame are seen at a safe distance. This wood must be the remains of the old forest, the stumps of which are seen in every peat hag. Gradually we ascend the hill, and we can now spy nearly all our ground; but as I watch both the men slowly moving their glasses as they sweep the face of the next hill I know there is nothing, and I decide to have lunch.

The mist has cleared off, and I can now see a good many miles to the north, but the higher ground still is in the clouds; I also notice a change in the wind—it is getting round to the south-west, but there is very little of it.

After lunch Ross says there is just a 'buttie' we have not seen yet, so I light a pipe and follow them. We had not gone two hundred yards when I saw Jimmie stop and feel for his glass without moving his eye from some distant object. I know what that means, and in an instant we are all excitement, as Jimmie closes his glass and says, 'I seen three, and one's a stag.'

Jimmie has the eye of a hawk, and a glass seems almost superfluous to him, except to note if the beast has a good head.

We peer cautiously over the top of the next knoll, and about five hundred yards off I can just make out the backs of three deer as they feed down a slope away from us; the golden brown grass is

just the colour of the hinds' backs, but I can see one is darker, and that is the stag.

They are in a very awkward place, as the ground is so flat, but after some discussion and trying the wind with bits of cotton-grass; we think we can manage it all right, so another careful spy is made to see if there are any others near, where they could detect us crawling; but there are none.

We walk down under cover of the ridge, and find we can cross the flat, so go on another two hundred yards, then down on our hands and knees in the wet, and avoiding water as much as possible, we make for the ridge. It is a hundred and fifty yards, and that is a long crawl in the wet; my hands get rather cold, as they are not accustomed to be used as feet. At last we are pretty near the ridge, and Ross cautiously raises his head. I see his eye move, and then Jimmie looks. The deer are not there.

Ross whispers 'They'll be feeding down; we must crawl on,' so on we go as fast and as silently as we can, Ross and Jimmie alternately raising a head until, under the cover of another little ridge, we can walk again. Just as we reach the ridge we see a hind, so we know we are catching them up. There is no time to be lost, so we crawl on again, rather lower, to get a covering ridge between us and the hind; another fifty yards, and then Ross signals to me to take the rifle; as he draws it out of the cover he says there are four or five hinds and two stags, but the lowest is the best stag, an eight-pointer, and a nice one. I draw up, and peering through the grass I see the deer about a hundred and twenty yards off; the better stag is feeding slowly away, and there is no time to be lost; the hinds are splendidly placed, but the stag is slightly hidden by the sloping ground. Ross whispers 'We canna get any nearer—take him now!' The fore sight is on him, and seems to cover most of his body at that distance, but I trust to luck. Bang goes the ·500 express, and the stag jumps aside to the left, the hinds give one look round and then gallop away, followed by the stag, who has to come up the hill to join them. He gives a galloping broadside shot, and Ross says, 'Take him again,' which I do, and see him stumble; then they are gone.

'Is he hit, Ross?' I say, loading and running at the same time.

'He's down,' says Ross—'no, but he's off again.'

I feel rather sickly, as I know I've only wounded him; but we hurry on to the next ridge, where we can see which way they go.

Down they pass to the river, eight or nine hinds and the two stags, the one I fired at having a broken fore-leg. We all lie on the ground and watch them going up the hill after crossing the river. 'I'm thinking we'll not see yon fellow again,' says Ross,

WE PROCEEDED TO DRAG HIM DOWN THE HILL

and 'I was longing to be off this morning, as I felt sure Mr. Lavington would get a stag the day.' Poor old Ross! He has a most unjustifiable idea of my shooting powers, and I feel quite sorry for him and the wretched stag; after all, one must miss sometimes, and it was not such an easy chance, so I light a pipe and try to console myself, while we watch the deer going up the opposite hill, which is not our ground. We see another lot of deer come and join them, and they slowly turn to the west; but the wounded stag makes straight to the sky-line, away from the hinds, accompanied by the other stag. At last I see the small stag outlined black against the sky, as he stops for his wounded companion; then he goes, but comes back again to look for the other. How is this? The wounded one is, I know, just below the sky-line—why does the other come back?

'Ross,' I said, 'the wounded stag is coming back,' and sure enough, not eighty yards from the sky-line, he turns and walks down the hill a few yards, then suddenly disappears into a peat bog.

'Why, he's lying down—he must be pretty bad, Ross.'

'Eh,' says Ross, who had been watching the hinds go away, 'lying down?'

'Yes, there he is,' says Jimmie. We see him get up and walk a few yards, and then disappear in another hole.

It is two miles away, and on another man's grouse ground, but one must follow a wounded stag if he goes into a hole like this; so we collect our belongings and run down the hill, have a drop of whisky, and then ford the river, which is nearly up to our knees; and decidedly chilly. It takes about forty-five minutes to get up to where we had seen the last of the stag, and we had marked him down as well as we could; but the ground looks very different when you are on it from what it does through a glass. It was a mass of peat hags, and deep ones in which a man could stand upright and not be seen. We thought we knew to a hundred yards where he was, but we had to be very careful not to give him our wind, as he might have moved again. So we had to go very carefully, Ross on one side of me, and Jimmie on the other, while I held the rifle uncovered and ready to shoot. We noted the stag's tracks where he came up, and I soon found plenty of blood; the bullet must have cut the artery in his leg. We searched very carefully for half an hour, working across the wind, and most exciting work it was, as we knew if he saw or winded us first, he would bolt like a rabbit. At last we had got almost to the end of the hags when I saw Jimmie stop and slowly fall on his knee; I signalled to Ross on my left, and we crawled to where Jimmie was. 'I seen his horn,' said Jimmie, and after

explaining where to look, I raised my head and saw what appeared to be a twig of dead wood in the hag, not longer than my finger, about thirty yards away, but it moved.

How Jimmie ever saw it I don't know. The stag was lying round a corner in the hag, and it was just one point we could see. I crawled away to the right a little way, so as to get a chance at him lying down, but found I could move no further on account of his getting my wind. Gradually I crawled closer until I was not more than fifteen yards from him; raising my head slowly I saw both his horns, but not an inch of his body, so, getting ready to jump up if necessary, I slowly rose a little higher. The moment I saw his eye he saw me, and, jumping up, bolted down the hag; I was on my feet now, and as he scrambled out of the bog, I fired; he galloped on, and I gave him the other barrel, and to my joy I saw him drop, and his legs raised against the sky as he rolled over. Both bullets had gone in behind the shoulder, one coming out in front of the other shoulder, and had he not been hit before he would have dropped to the first shot; but a wounded stag makes great efforts.

After gralloching the stag we proceeded to drag him down the hill towards the river, to avoid disturbing this ground when the pony came to fetch him; it was a pretty tough job, too, and we were not sorry to leave the beast about a hundred and fifty yards from the river, putting heather, &c., on his body, to keep the eagles or crows away, and an envelope tied to his horn with our address. Ross was delighted at the luck which gave us a stag after all, and after finishing what was left of our whisky, we started to walk ten miles back to where the cart was waiting. Ross was full of tales of three robbers who had been shot many years ago and buried by 'yon clump of nettles' on the face of the hill above us, and just above where the falcon's nest was last year, and it's all in print, so must be true.

The next tale, of a woman who lived for five years and never touched food, provoked a snigger from Jimmie, but Ross was indignant. 'Did not the gentleman come from Edinburgh and offer her father 300*l.* to take her away? but no, he would not have the money, and you know the stones east of the black pool—well, them's all that's left of the house;' so we said it was wonderful, but I don't think Jimmie was satisfied.

The evening was closing in, and our tales grew fewer as we walked along in single file the best pace we could; at last we reached the end of the valley, and, looking back, I saw the last red light of the setting sun behind the dark hills. Alas, good-bye!

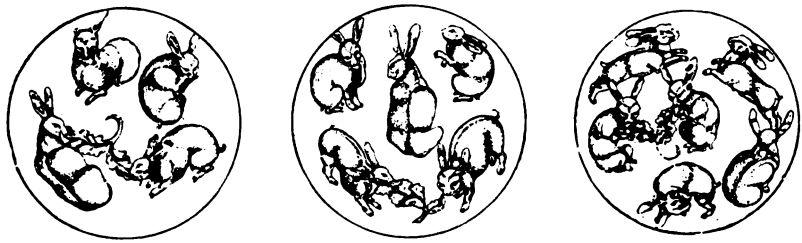


FIGURE-SKATING COMPETITIONS

BY EDGAR SYERS

In these days of artificial ice rinks, and consequent opportunities for practice, it has struck me that we should do well to institute figure-skating competitions on the lines laid down by the International Skating Union, the governing body of skating, to which all the skating countries of the world, with the exception of America, are affiliated.

Given sufficient opportunities for practice, I fail to see why an Englishman should not hold his own in an international competition, and I hope to see the day when we shall add a Figure-Skating Championship to our list of international victories in the world of sport.

I have frequently been asked abroad why Englishmen do not take part in these competitions. Until the last two years the obvious answer has been that we did not get sufficient ice to enable our men to practise; but that excuse no longer holds good. The foreign skating associations are anxious to see us; the English love of sport and fair play is recognised everywhere, and an accredited English representative would be sure of a most hearty welcome.

Some of our elder skaters are said to object to all forms of competition; to them I would indicate that skating is the sport least likely to suffer by the introduction of competitions. Skaters as a class must be men of considerable leisure and means, for a great amount of time devoted to persistent practice is necessary to enable an intending competitor to skate accurately the more difficult of the compulsory figures, apart from the time and patience which must be devoted to elaborating the individual programme or free figures. The most important factor, however,

which tends to keep figure-skating a pure sport is the entire absence of professionalism in competitions. The International Skating Union, under whose auspices and rules all meetings are held, have resolutely declined to encourage professionalism, either in speed or figure skating, with the result that competitions are free from those undesirable conditions which the professional element too often engenders.

I can conceive no more pleasant experience than a visit to Vienna, Stockholm, Davos Platz, or any of the well-known skating resorts, when a championship or other competition is in progress. The area of perfect ice reserved for the competitors around which the spectators sit or stand, the prettily decorated rink, with its background of snow, the brave display of bunting, the girls in pretty skating toilets, the men in their becoming skating costumes, all contribute to form a charming picture.

Let us consider that the competitors have already skated the compulsory figures and are about to give their exhibitions of free skating, in which each introduces his own particular pet figures and combinations, which, to the general spectators, are more interesting than the somewhat tedious repetition of the compulsory work.

The judges are ranged at intervals round the rink, the first competitor has called to the band for his favourite tune, generally a waltz, and his name and club having been announced, he bursts into the skating area at full speed, clad in the becoming costume affected on the Continent—viz. short, close-fitting black jacket trimmed with astrachan; astrachan cap and tights or breeches, and hessian boots. The entry is usually made at speed on a large and bold outside or inside forward spiral, the cap is removed in salute and held high above the head, the body erect, with a free and graceful carriage. When the spiral has been brought to a centre the cap is replaced, and the competitor proceeds to demonstrate his programme of free figures. The point chiefly aimed at is continuity; the skater should never be at fault, and one figure should merge into another almost imperceptibly. The figures should be as attractive as possible, and on no account should the skater introduce any of those contained in the compulsory list, but should aim at producing novel combinations and *tours de force*.

The training necessary for these contests, though not so arduous as that for many forms of sport, must be carefully carried out; the intending competitor must be in good general condition; he must carry no superfluous flesh, his legs being strong and flexible, and his whole body supple. Most competitors indulge in

light gymnastic work once or twice a day for half an hour, to attain this condition.

The time for actual skating varies, two or three hours being generally considered sufficient for practice. Some skaters stand in a species of stocks for a time each day in order to train the feet to take up readily the positions necessary for certain figures, such as the outside forward spread eagle, &c.

As regards diet, no particular restrictions seem to be imposed. Indeed, most skaters are endowed with enormous appetites, the effect, no doubt, of constant exercise in dry cold air. A considerable amount of food is probably necessary, as I have noticed that skating reduces weight rapidly. Smoking and drinking in moderation are admissible; some red wine or light beer is generally taken with meals.

As the I. S. U. rules governing competitions, methods of marking, definition of good form, &c., may be of interest, I append some extracts.

The rules were adopted at the skating congress held in Stockholm, August 1897; they were submitted by the Vienna S. C. and adopted with some trifling alterations.

An international competition in figure skating is divided into (*a*) the skating of prescribed exercises (compulsory figures), and (*b*) the skating of optional figures for a specified length of time (free skating figures). The prize is assigned according to the whole number of marks attained in both divisions.

The compulsory figures are to be selected from the diagrams appended to the rules, and are to be at least six in number. Figures which begin (*a*) right, and (*b*) left, are to be skated in both forms (*a*) and (*b*).

For the world's championship the following are found: serpentine line, three, two turns, loop, rocker, counter; bracket must be included in one at least of the figures selected.

Every compulsory figure can only be begun 'from rest'—that is, with a single stroke with the other foot; every figure must be repeated three times, both on the right and left foot, without pause.

The success of every compulsory figure is marked with the numbers 0, 1—5, of which 0—not skated, 2—pass, 3—good, 5—faultless; 1 and 4 are intermediate.

In assigning a number there ranks in the first place correct tracing on the ice; in the second, carriage and movement; in the third, size of the figure; in the fourth, approximately accurate covering of the traces in the triple repetition.

As rules of correct carriage and movement in skating, the compulsory figures—within which rules the individuality of the skater receives free play and all possible consideration on the part of the judges—are to be regarded.

The requisites are, upright carriage, not bent at the hips, but without being stiff: head upright. Strong bending of knee or body to be only momentary. Unemployed foot to be held only a little way from the ice, not dragging behind, toe turned downwards and outwards; knee slightly bent, generally held behind the employed foot, otherwise swinging freely and assisting the movement, but without being held far away. Arms to hang down, not swing; like the unemployed foot they can be used to assist the movement, but without holding elbow or hand far away from the body; hands, when possible, never above the waist. Fingers neither spread nor clenched. In general everything strenuous, angular, or stiff to be avoided in the movement; no effort is to be strongly expressed, but the impression that the figures are executed without trouble is to be aimed at.

The free skating is marked (*a*) for the contents of the programme achieved (difficulty and variety); (*b*) for the manner of achievement (harmonic composition, sureness, carriage and movement), in each case with the numbers 0 to 5 having the same significance as in the compulsory figures.

In the results there must be published at least the total number of points for compulsory figures, and for free figures from every card, as well as the final numbers resulting from them.

The writer had often urged the National Skating Association of Great Britain to apply for permission to hold the World's Championship in London, but some diffidence was felt by the Committee of that body owing to the fact that few of them were conversant with the foreign methods of judging. When the foregoing rules were adopted by the I. S. U. that difficulty disappeared, and permission to hold the championship was applied for and obtained.

The championship was held at the National Skating Palace on Tuesday, February 15, 1898. Major Victor Balck, the president of the International Skating Union, made the journey from Stockholm in order to act as referee. Count von Rosen, of the Stockholm Skating Club, Herr C. Fillunger, Vienna Skating Club, and Messrs. A. F. Jenkin, C. E. Bell, W. F. Adams and Captain Thomson of the National Skating Association, acting as judges.

The championship was a complete success, the National Skating Palace being packed with an enthusiastic and critical

A COMPETITION AT THE NATIONAL SKATING PALACE

assemblage. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, a patron of the N.S.A., was present, and took a keen interest in the skating, making a request that each competitor should have an opportunity of exhibiting his special programme.

Five entries were received, viz.: Herr Grenander, Stockholm Skating Club; Herr Hügel, Vienna Skating Club; Herr Fuchs, Munich Skating Club; Herr Weik, Helsingfors Skating Club, and Mr. C. Holt, N.S.A.

Both Messrs. Fuchs and Hügel had previously won the World's Championship, the former at St. Petersburg in 1896, and the latter at Stockholm in 1897.

Herr Grenander had competed for the championship at Berlin in 1893, but owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding among the judges as to the relative marks obtained by Herr Grenander and his opponent, Herr Engelmann, the contest was annulled by the I.S.U. Messrs. Fuchs, Hügel, and Grenander had also won distinction in many minor contests, and to Mr. Grenander belonged the honour of never having suffered defeat.

Of the remaining competitor, Holt (Weik did not compete), perhaps the least said the better. He was hopelessly outclassed, both as regards general form and the ability to skate the compulsory figures, several of which he did not attempt, and it was no doubt an error of judgment on his part to have entered.

It was unfortunate that no representative English skater entered, as the N.S.A. numbers among its members several who could, even in the, to them, somewhat unfamiliar Continental style, have acquitted themselves very creditably.

The competition resulted in a win for Grenander; in the compulsory figures he did not score so highly as either Hügel or Fuchs, and at the conclusion of the first part of the programme the marks were: Hügel 973, Fuchs 953, Grenander 892.

Fuchs dropped a considerable number of points in the eighth figure—loop change loop, R.O.B. and L.O.B.—perhaps the most difficult of all the compulsory figures—in which he twice failed to execute the loops satisfactorily.

Hügel skated this figure remarkably well, with less apparent effort than Grenander.

At the conclusion of the first section (compulsory figures), it was seen by the experts present that Grenander had failed to score as highly as his opponents, and his chance of winning seemed a poor one. In the evening, however, he showed that at free skating he was far superior; so good a programme did he present, given with such dash and grace, that five out of the six judges

awarded to him the maximum number of marks obtainable in this section.

When the total marks awarded were published, it was found that Grenander had won, with 1,423; Hügel second, 1,374, and Fuchs third, 1,345.

The form of the competitors was, of course, entirely different from that practised by the majority of English skaters, and no doubt the Continental method requires special bodily aptitude and more constant practice than the generality of English skaters could give; but to a good skater, who could devote sufficient time, it presents no very serious difficulties.

Mr. Readhead, perhaps the finest exponent of the purely English style, last winter, at Davos Platz, took up Continental skating with a view of competing at the meeting which was held there in February, for which several well-known experts from Berlin and Vienna had entered. So rapidly did Mr. Readhead master the compulsory figures, and so readily adapt himself to the novel conditions, that, had it not been for an unfortunate illness, which hindered his practice and prevented his competing, there is no doubt that he would have been placed in the first three.

It can scarcely be denied that the Continental style is infinitely more graceful and pleasing to the spectator than ours, and no doubt each year fresh converts to it will be made.

The skating of Fuchs more nearly approximated to ours than that of either Hügel or Grenander; his figures were larger than theirs, the unemployed leg was carried closer to the employed, and the arms were held low and not permitted to assist the movement in any marked degree.

Grenander, though not the most accurate, is quite the most graceful skater I have seen, the effect of his manner of carrying the unemployed leg far away from the body, the toe always pointing downward and outward, the unemployed knee only slightly bent (the bent unemployed knee is considered the height of bad form), the arms carried so as to assist the movement as much as possible, but always presenting a perfectly harmonious effect.

As may be gathered from this description, Grenander is essentially a *poseur* in skating; but his attitude is always graceful, and his wonderful command of body and limb can only be the result of a long course of gymnastic training, in which the Swedes excel, and which has no doubt tended to the evolution of their characteristic style.

The figure-skating championship was first officially instituted

by the International Skating Union in 1891; the event was then termed the Championship of Europe, which title was continued till 1896, when the title World's Championship was introduced, the European Championship still continuing as a minor event.

The I. S. U. is the only body having authority to award the title of champion, and as one frequently sees Mr. Blank or Professor Dash advertised as a 'champion skater,' or perhaps more particularly as '*the* champion' skater, it is as well to note that the claims of these performers (often, be it allowed, good skaters) to such distinction are usually, when investigated, found to be of a singularly unconvincing nature, appearing to depend chiefly on the unfortunate fact that in the world of sport such false pretensions are extremely difficult to suppress.

The breasts of these claimants are usually profusely gay with decorations, which on inspection will be found to consist of gifts from admirers, rather than the hardly earned rewards of *bonâ fide* competition.

The championships have been won as under:

EUROPE

1891.	Hamburg	O. Uhlig	Berliner Eislauf Verein
1892.	Vienna	Ed. Engelmann	Training Eisclub, Wein
1893.	Berlin	Competition annulled by vote of the I.S.U.	
1894.	Vienna	Ed. Engelmann	Training Eisclub, Wein
1895.	Budapest	T. Von Földvary	Budapester Eislauf Verein
1896. 1897.	Competition not held		
1898.	Trondhjem	V. Salchow	Stockholms Almanna Skridskoklub

WORLD

1896.	St. Petersburg	G. Fuchs	Münchner Eislauf-Verein
1897.	Stockholm	G. Hügel	Wiener Eislauf Verein
1898.	London	H. Grenander	Stockholms Almanna Skridskoklub and National Skating Association

This year the World's Championship will be held in Vienna on January 29, the Championship of Europe at Davos Platz on January 14, 15. The World's Championship will be arranged and carried out by the Training Eisclub, who have sent very cordial invitations to several of our skaters to attend and act as judges; any English skater, who cared to make the journey, would be sure of a very pleasant time, and would have an excellent opportunity of comparing the skating of the Vienna school with our own.

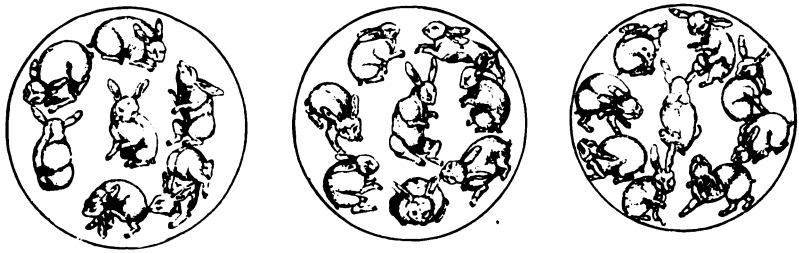
The English skate has been evolved as the most suitable for

the art of combined skating, to the perfection of which all English skating is supposed to tend and be subservient.

For the upright position and large figures the low skate, with a radius of seven feet, is admirably adapted; but for continuous work and the execution of such figures as loops, cross-cuts, &c., a smaller radius is necessary, and I have noticed a growing tendency among our best skaters to depart from the traditional seven feet radius and adopt one of six feet.

The Austrians affect a skate with a rounded prow, after the model introduced by Jackson Haynes, the celebrated American skater, the width of blade being about a quarter of an inch, slightly behind the centre (where the weight of the body rests), tapering to an eighth of an inch at the ends; the Norwegian skate is of a somewhat similar pattern, but the blade is much broader and generally slightly convex; the Swedish skate of the Grenander pattern is very high and of light construction, the height of the heel being $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches, under the ball of the foot 2 inches, and at the toe $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the toe of this skate comes to a point to facilitate the making of toe spins or pirouettes. The radius of all these skates is from 5 feet to $5\frac{1}{2}$. To give the necessary support when using high skates it is desirable to have a closely fitting boot, with uppers, of pliant leather, reaching to the swell of the calf.

In conclusion I would impress on all who think of taking to the Continental style that it requires an athletic habit of body and great general activity; to those who do not possess these advantages the quiet English figures are no doubt better adapted.



SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.

BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

No. IV.—THE WATERS OF STRIFE

I KNEW Bat Callaghan's face long before I was able to put a name to it. There was seldom a court day in Skebawn that I was not aware of his level brows and superfluously intense expression somewhere among the knot of corner-boys who patronised the weekly sittings of the bench of magistrates. His social position appeared to fluctuate: I have seen him driving a car; he sometimes held my horse for me—that is to say, he sat on the counter of a public-house while the Quaker slumbered in the gutter; and, on one occasion, he retired, at my bidding, to Cork Jail, there to meditate upon the inadvisability of defending a friend from the attentions of the police with the tailboard of a cart.

He next obtained prominence in my regard at a regatta held under the auspices of 'The Sons of Liberty,' a local football club that justified its title by the patriot green of its jerseys and its free interpretation of the rules of the game. The announcement of my name on the posters as a patron—a privilege acquired at the cost of a reluctant half-sovereign—made it incumbent on me to put in an appearance, even though the festival coincided with my Petty Sessions day at Skebawn; and at some five of the clock on a brilliant September afternoon I found myself driving down the stony road that dropped in zigzags to the borders of the lake on which the races were to come off.

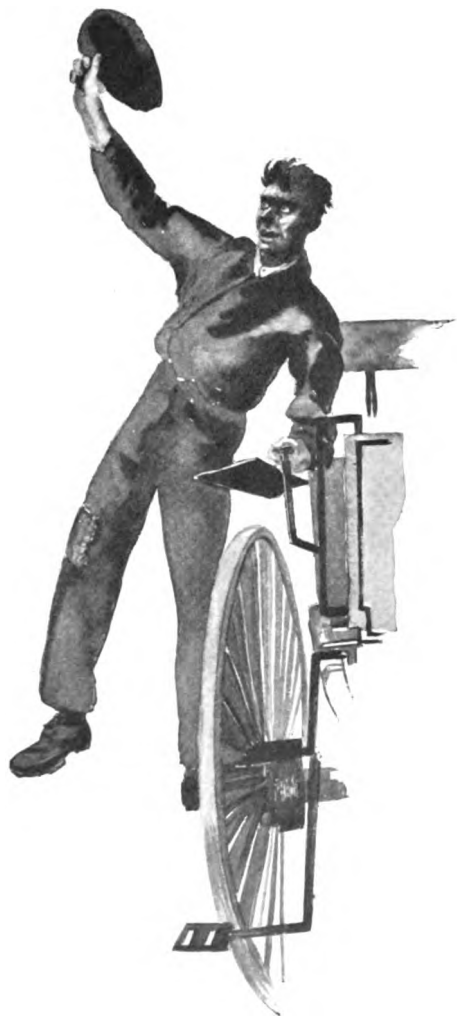
I believe that the selection of Lough Lonen as the scene of the regatta was not unconnected with the fact that the secretary of the club owned a public-house at the cross roads at one end of it; none the less, the president of the Royal Academy could

scarcely have chosen more picturesque surroundings. A mountain towered steeply up from the lake's edge, dark with the sad green of beech-trees in September: fir woods followed the curve of the shore, and leaned far over the answering darkness of the water; and above the trees rose the toppling steepnesses of the hill, painted with a purple glow of heather. The lake was about a mile long, and, tumbling from its further end, a fierce and narrow river fled away west to the sea, some four or five miles off.

I had not seen a boat race since I was at Oxford, and the words still called up before my eyes a vision of smart parasols, of gorgeous barges, of snowy-clad youths, and of low slim outriggers, winged with the level flight of oars, slitting the water to the sway of the line of flat backs. Certainly undreamed-of possibilities in aquatics were revealed to me as I reined in the Quaker on the outskirts of the crowd, and saw below me the festival of the Sons of Liberty in full swing. Boats of all shapes and sizes, outrageously overladen, moved about the lake, with oars flourishing to the strains of concertinas. Black swarms of people seethed along the water's edge, congesting here and there round the dingy tents and stalls of green apples; and the club's celebrated brass band, enthroned in a wagonette, and stimulated by the presence of a barrel of porter on the box-seat, was belching forth 'The Boys of Wexford,' under the guidance of a disreputable ex-militia drummer, in a series of crashing discords.

Almost as I arrived a pistol-shot set the echoes clattering round the lake, and three boats burst out abreast from the throng into the open water. Two of the crews were in shirt-sleeves, the third wore the green jerseys of the football club. The boats were of the heavy sea-going build, and pulled six oars apiece, oars of which the looms were scarcely narrower than the blades, and were, of the two, a shade heavier. None the less the rowers started dauntlessly at thirty-five strokes a minute, quickening up, incredible as it may seem, as they rounded the mark boat in the first lap of the two-mile course. The rowing was, in general style, more akin to the action of beating up eggs with a fork than to any other form of athletic exercise; but in its unorthodox way it kicked the heavy boats along at a surprising pace. The oars squeaked and grunted against the thole-pins, the coxswains kept up an unceasing flow of oratory, and superfluous little boys in punts contrived to intervene at all the more critical turning-points of the race, only evading the flail of the oncoming oars by

performing prodigies of 'waggling' with a single oar at the stern. I took out my watch and counted the strokes when they were passing the mark boat for the second time; they were pulling a fraction over forty; one of the shirt-sleeved crews was obviously in trouble, the other, with humped backs and jerking oars, was holding its own against the green jerseys amid the blended yells of friends and foes. When for the last time they rounded the green flag there were but two boats in the race, and the foul that had been imminent throughout was at length achieved with a rattle of oars and a storm of curses. They were clear again in a moment, the shirt-sleeved crew getting away with a distinct lead, and it was at about this juncture that I became aware that the coxswains had abandoned their long-handled tillers, and were standing over their respective strokes, shoving frantically at their oars, and maintaining the while a ceaseless bawl of encouragement and defiance. It looked like a foregone conclusion for the leaders, and the war of cheers rose to frenzy. The word 'cheering,' indeed, is but an euphuism, and in no way expresses the serrated yell, composed of epithets, advice, and imprecations, that was flung like a live thing at the oncoming boats. The green jerseys answered to this stimulant with a wild spurt that drove the bow of their boat within a measurable distance of



'MORE POWER TO YE, LARRY, ME OWLD DARLIN'!'

their opponents' stroke oar. In another second a thoroughly successful foul would have been effected, but the cox of the leading boat proved himself equal to the emergency by unshipping his tiller, and with it dealing 'bow' of the green jerseys such a blow over the head as effectually dismissed him from the sphere of practical politics.

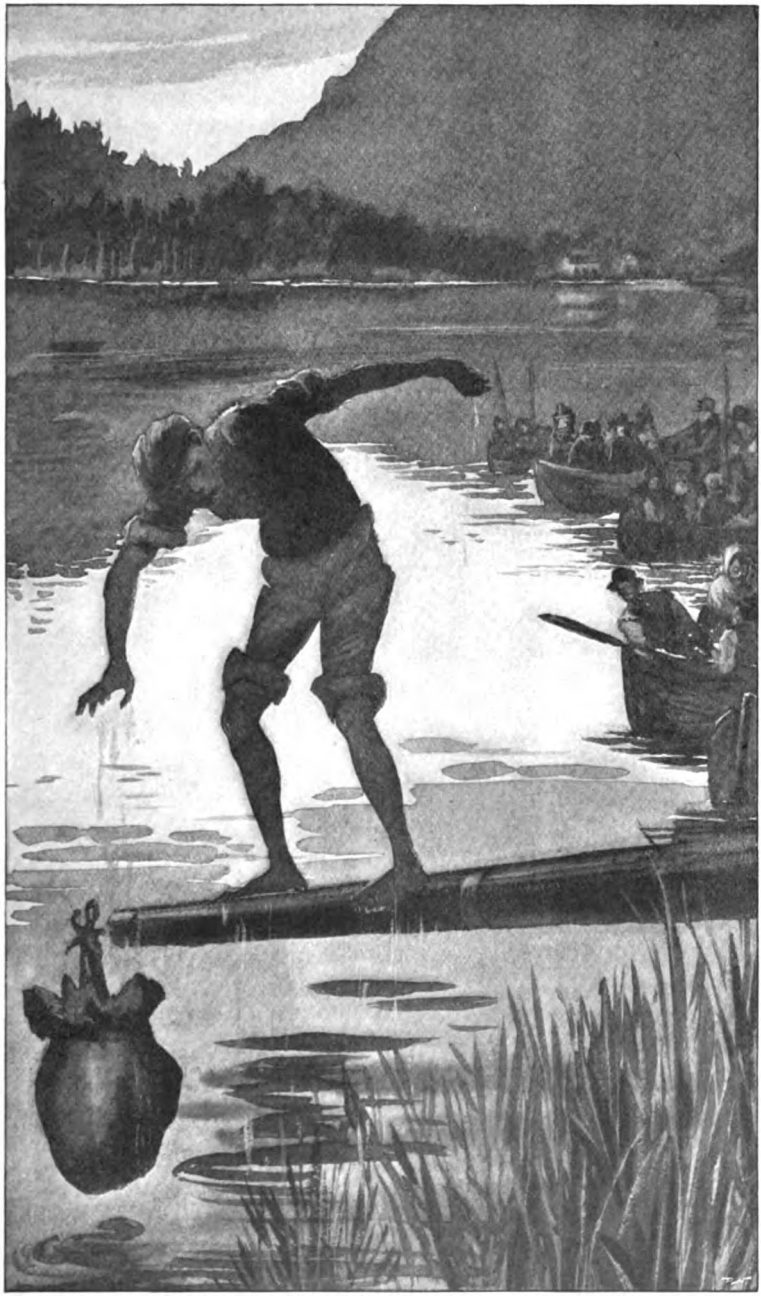
A great roar of laughter greeted this feat of arms, and a voice at my dogcart's wheel pierced the clamour:

'More power to ye, Larry, me owld darlin'!'

I looked down and saw Bat Callaghan, with shining eyes, and a face white with excitement, poising himself on one foot on the box of my wheel in order to get a better view of the race. Almost before I had time to recognise him, a man in a green jersey caught him round the legs and jerked him down. Callaghan fell into the throng, recovered himself in an instant, and rushed, white and dangerous, at his assailant. The Son of Liberty was no less ready for the fray, and what is known in Ireland as 'the father and mother of a row' was imminent. Already, however, one of those unequalled judges of the moral temperature of a crowd, a sergeant of the R.I.C., had quietly interposed his bulky person between the combatants, and the coming trouble was averted.

Elsewhere battle was raging. The race was over and the committee boat was hemmed in by the rival crews, supplemented by craft of all kinds. The 'objection' was being lodged, and in its turn objected to, and I can only liken the process to the screaming warfare of seagulls round a piece of carrion. The tumult was still at its height when out of its very heart two four-oared boats broke forth, and a pistol-shot proclaimed that another race had begun, the public interest in which was specially keen, owing to the fact that the rowers were stalwart country girls, who made up in energy what they lacked in skill. It was a short race, once round the mark boat only, and, like a successful farce, it 'went with a roar' from start to finish. Foul after foul, each followed by a healing interval of calm, during which the crews, who had all caught crabs, were recovering themselves and their oars, marked its progress; and when the two boats, locked in an inextricable embrace, at length passed the winning flag, and the crews, oblivious of judges and public, fell to untrammelled personal abuse and to doing up their hair, I decided that I had seen the best of the fun, and prepared to go home.

It was, as it happened, the last race of the day, and nothing



CALLAGHAN'S LITHE FIGURE, SLEEK AND DRIPPING

remained in the way of excitement save the greased pole with the pig slung in a bag at the end of it. My final impression of the Lough Lonen Regatta was of Callaghan's lithe figure, sleek and dripping, against the yellow sky, as he poised on the swaying pole with the broken gold of the water beneath him.

Limited as was my experience of the South-west of Ireland, I was in no way surprised to hear on the following afternoon from Peter Cadogan that there had been 'sthrokes' the night before, when the boys were going home from the regatta, and that the police were searching for one Jimmy Foley.

'What do they want him for?' I asked.

'Sure it's according as a man that was bringing a car of bog-wood was tellin' me, sir,' answered Peter, pursuing his occupation of washing the dogcart with unabated industry; 'they say Jimmy's wife went roaring to the police, saying she could get no account of her husband.'

'I suppose he's beaten some fellow and is hiding,' I suggested.

'Well, that might be, sir,' assented Peter respectfully. He plied his mop vigorously in intricate places about the springs, which would, I knew, have never been explored save for my presence.

'It's what John Hennessy was saying, that he was hard set to get his horse past Cluin Cross, the way the blood was sthrewn about the road,' resumed Peter; 'sure they were fighting like wasps in it half the night.'

'Who were fighting?'

'I couldn't say, indeed, sir. Some o' thim low rakish lads from the town, I suppose,' replied Peter with virtuous respectability.

When Peter Cadogan was quietly and intelligently candid, to pursue an inquiry was seldom of much avail.

Next day in Skebawn I met little Murray, the district inspector, very alert and smart in his rifle-green uniform, going forth to collect evidence about the fight. He told me that the police were pretty certain that one of the Sons of Liberty, named Foley, had been murdered, but, as usual, the difficulty was to get anyone to give information; all that was known was that he was gone, and that his wife had identified his cap, which had been found drenched with blood by the roadside. Murray gave it as his opinion that the whole business had arisen out of the row over the disputed race, and that there must have been a dozen people looking on when the murder was done; but so far no evidence was forthcoming, and after a day and a night of search the police had not been able to find the body.

'No,' said Flurry Knox, who had joined us, 'and if it was any of those mountainy men did away with him you might scrape Ireland with a small-tooth comb and you'll not get him!'

That evening I smoked an after-dinner cigarette out of doors in the mild starlight, strolling about the rudimentary paths of

I MET LITTLE MURRAY, THE DISTRICT INSPECTOR

what would, I hoped, some day be Philippa's garden. The bats came stooping at the red end of my cigarette, and from the covert behind the house I heard once or twice the delicate bark of a fox. Civilisation seemed a thousand miles off, as far away as the falling star that had just drawn a line of pale fire halfway down the

northern sky. I had been nearly a year at Shreelane House by myself now, and the time seemed very long to me. It was slow work putting by money, even under the austerities of Mrs. Cadogan's *régime*, and though I had warned Philippa I meant to marry her after Christmas, there were moments, and this was one of them, when it seemed an idle threat.

'Pether!' the strident voice of Mrs. Cadogan intruded upon my meditations. 'Go tell the Major his coffee is waitin' on him!'

I went gloomily into my hideous study, and, with a resignation born of adversity, swallowed the mixture of chicory and liquorice which my housekeeper possessed the secret of distilling from the best and most expensive coffee. My theory about it was that it added to the illusion that I had dined, and moreover that it kept me awake, and I generally had a good deal of writing to do after dinner.

It was eleven o'clock when I leaned back in my chair, having finished the notes I had been making on an adjourned case of 'stroke-hauling' salmon in the Lonen River; and wearied with the events of the day I dozed off. Perhaps it was the conjunction in my brain of this fishing case and Foley's strange disappearance, for in a singularly distinct vision I saw before me the banks of the stream, and some men in the attire of constables landing, not a salmon, but the body of the missing man! The scene came before me with wonderful clearness, and impressed me so mightily that I fell asleep still realising it.

I got up early next morning and drove to Skebawn to see Murray. I had made up my mind to tell him what had happened to me, trusting that his Highland blood would save him from despising the supernatural because he did not understand it. Murray was, I discovered, not in a mood to despise the supernatural, or anything else that had a suggestion to make, having been out till nine o'clock on the previous night on a fruitless search for any clue to the mystery of Jimmy Foley's disappearance.

'Well, it's worth trying, I suppose,' he admitted, 'but I may tell you the river's a good mile from the place where the fight was.'

I had sessions to attend on the extreme outskirts of my district, and could not wait, as Murray suggested, to see the thing out, but throughout the day the question as to whether or not I had made a fool of both him and myself was uncomfortably present with me. I did not get home till the following day, and when I arrived I found a letter from Murray awaiting me.

'Your dream was right. We found Foley's body knocking about against the posts of the weir. The head was wrapped in his own green jersey, and had been smashed in by a stone. We suspect a fellow named Bat Callaghan, who has bolted, but I think there were a lot of them in it. I wish you would ring up that familiar of yours again and get us another tip. The inquest will be held to-morrow.'

I re-read the letter slowly, and as I did so I knew how sceptically little I had expected the news it contained. All the psychological ambitions that had been dashed by the painful episode of Great Uncle McCarthy revived, and feeling that nothing could surprise me now, I laid out sheets of paper, and invited further developments. Surprise, however, awaited me, but in the form of total failure. James Foley refused to be rung up; the impenetrable door had closed again upon him and his secret.

The coroner's jury took a cautious view of the cause of the catastrophe, and brought in a verdict of 'death by misadventure,' and I presently found it to be my duty to call a magisterial inquiry to further investigate the matter. A few days before this was to take place, I was engaged in the delicate task of displaying to my landlord, Mr. Flurry Knox, the defects of the pantry sink, when Mrs. Cadogan advanced upon us with the information that the Widow Callaghan from Cluin would be thankful to speak to me, and had brought me a present of 'a fine young goose.'

'Is she come over here looking for Bat?' said Flurry, withdrawing his arm and the longest kitchen-ladle from the pipe that he had been probing; 'she knows you're handy at hiding your friends, Mary; maybe it's he that's stopping the drain!'

Mrs. Cadogan turned her large red face upon her late employer.

'I wish yerself was stuck in it, Master Flurry, the way ye'd hear Pether cursin' the full o' the house when he's striving to wash the things in that unnatural little trough.'

'Are you sure it's Peter does all the cursing?' retorted Flurry. 'I hear Father Scanlan has it in for you this long time for not going to confession.'

The contest might have been continued indefinitely, had I not struck up the swords with a request that Mrs. Callaghan might be sent round to the hall door. There we found a tall, grey-haired countrywoman waiting for us at the foot of the steps, in the hooded blue cloak that is peculiar to the south of Ireland; from the fact that she clutched a pocket handkerchief in her right hand I augured a stormy interview, but nothing could have been

more self-restrained and even imposing than the reverence with which she greeted Flurry and me.

'Good morning to your honours,' she began, with a dignified and extremely imminent snuffle. 'I ask your pardon for troubling you, Major Yeates, but I haven't a one in the counthry to give me an adwice, and I have no confidence only in your honour's experiments.'

'Experience she means,' prompted Flurry. 'Didn't you get advice enough out of Mr. Murray yesterday?' he went on aloud. 'I heard he was at Cluin to see you.'

'And if he was itself, it's little adwantage anyone'd get out of that little whipper-shnapper of a shnap-dhragon!' responded Mrs. Callaghan tartly; 'he was with me for a half-hour giving me every big rock of English till I had a reel in me head. I declare to ye, Mr. Flurry, after he had gone out o' the house, ye wouldn't throw three farthings for me!'

The pocket handkerchief was here utilised, after which, with a heavy groan, Mrs. Callaghan again took up her parable.

'I towld him first and last I'd lose me life if I had to go into the coort, and if I did itself sure th' attorneys could rip no more out o' me than what he did himself.'

'Did you tell him where was Bat?' inquired Flurry casually.

At this Mrs. Callaghan immediately dissolved into tears.

'Is it Bat?' she howled. 'If th' angel Gabriel came down from heaven asking me where was Bat, I could give him no satisfaction. The divil a know I know what's happened him. He came home with me sober and good-natured from the rogatta, and the next morning he axed a fresh egg for his breakfast, and God forgive me, I wouldn't break the score I was taking to the hotel, and with that he slapped the cup o' tay into the fire and went out the door, and I never got a word of him since, good nor bad. God knows 'tis I got throuble with that poor boy, and he the only one I have to look to in the world!'

I cut the matter short by asking her what she wanted me to do for her, and sifted out from amongst much extraneous detail the fact that she relied upon my renowned wisdom and clemency to preserve her from being called as a witness at the coming inquiry. The gift of the goose served its intended purpose of embarrassing my position, but in spite of it I broke to the Widow Callaghan my inability to help her. She did not, of course, believe me, but she was too well-bred to say so. In Ireland one becomes accustomed to this attitude.

As it turned out, however, Bat Callaghan's mother had nothing to fear from the inquiry. She was by turns deaf, imbecile, garrulously candid, and furiously abusive of Murray's principal witness, a frightened lad of seventeen, who had sworn to having seen Callaghan and Jimmy Foley 'shaping at one another to fight,' at an hour when, according to Mrs. Callaghan, he was 'lying sthretched on the beddeen with a sick shtomach' in consequence of the malignant character of the porter supplied by the last witness's father. It all ended, as such cases so often do in Ireland, in complete moral certainty in the minds of all concerned as to the guilt of the accused, and entire impotence on the part of the law to prove it. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Bartholomew Callaghan; and the clans of Callaghan and Foley fought rather more bloodily than usual, as occasion served; and at intervals during the next few months Murray used to ask me how James Foley was getting on, and if I had received any more communications from the Dead Letter Office, to which I was wont to reply with condolences on the failure of the R.I.C. to find the Widow Callaghan's only son for her; and that was about all that came of it.

Events with which the present story has no concern took me to England towards the end of the following March. It so happened that my old regiment, the ——th Fusiliers, was quartered at Whincastle, within a couple of hours by rail of Philippa's home, where I was staying, and, since my wedding was now within measurable distance, my former brothers-in-arms invited me over to dine and sleep, and to receive a valedictory silver claret jug that they were magnanimous enough to bestow upon a backslider. I enjoyed the dinner as much as any man can enjoy his dinner when he knows he has to make a speech at the end of it; through much and varied conversation I strove, like a nervous mother who cannot trust her offspring out of her sight, to keep before my mind's eye the opening sentences that I had composed in the train; I felt that if I could only 'get away' satisfactorily I might trust the Ayala ('89) to do the rest, and of that fount of inspiration there was no lack. As it turned out, I got away all right, though the sight of the double line of expectant faces and red mess jackets nearly scattered those precious opening sentences, and I am afraid that so far as the various subsequent points went that I had intended to make, I stayed away; however, neither Demosthenes, nor a Nationalist member at a Cork election, could have been listened to with more gratifying attention, and I sat down, hot and happy,

to be confronted with my own flushed visage, hideously reflected in the glittering paunch of the claret jug.

Once safely over the presentation, the evening mellowed into frivolity, and it was pretty late before I found myself settled down to whist, at sixpenny points, in the ancient familiar way, while most of the others fell to playing pool in the billiard-room next door. I have played whist from my youth up; with the preternatural seriousness of a subaltern, with the self-assurance of a senior captain, with the privileged irascibility of a major; and my eighteen months of abstinence at Shreelane had only whetted my appetite for what I consider the best of games. After the long lonely evenings there, with the rats for company, and, for relaxation, a 'deck' of that specially demoniacal American variety of patience, known as 'Fooly Ann,' it was wondrous agreeable to sit again among my fellows, and 'lay the longs' on a severely scientific rubber of whist, as though Mrs. Cadogan and the Skebawn Bench of Magistrates had never existed.

We were in the first game of the second rubber, and I was holding a very nice playing hand; I had early in the game moved forth my trumps to battle, and I was now in the ineffable position of scoring with the small cards of my long suit. The cards fell and fell in silence, and Ballantyne, my partner, raked in the tricks like a machine. The concentrated quiet of the game was suddenly arrested by a sharp, unmistakable sound from the barrack yard outside, the snap of a Lee-Metford rifle.

'What was that?' exclaimed Moffat, the senior major.

Before he had finished speaking there was a second shot.

'By Jove, those were rifle-shots! Perhaps I'd better go and see what's up,' said Ballantyne, who was captain of the week, throwing down his cards and making a bolt for the door.

He had hardly got out of the room when the first long high note of the 'assembly' sang out, sudden and clear. We all sprang to our feet, and as the bugle-call went shrilly on, the other men came pouring in from the billiard-room, and stampeded to their quarters to get their swords. At the same moment the mess sergeant appeared at the outer door with a face as white as his shirt-front.

'The sentry on the magazine guard has been shot, sir!' he said excitedly to Moffat. 'They say he's dead!'

We were all out in the barrack square in an instant; it was clear moonlight, and the square was already alive with hurrying figures buttoning on tunics and cramming on caps as they ran to fall in. I was a free agent these times, and I followed the mess

sergeant across the square towards the distant corner where the magazine stands. As we doubled round the end of the men's quarters, we nearly ran into a small party of men who were advancing slowly and heavily in our direction.

'Ere he is, sir!' said the mess sergeant, stopping himself abruptly.

They were carrying the sentry to the hospital. His busby had fallen off; the moon shone mildly on his pale, convulsed face, and foam and strange inhuman noises came from his lips. His head was rolling from side to side on the arm of one of the men who was carrying him; as it turned towards me I was struck by something vaguely familiar in the face, and I wondered if he had been in my old company.

'What's his name, sergeant?' I said to the mess sergeant.

'Private Harris, sir,' replied the sergeant; 'he's only lately come up from the depôt, and this was his first time on sentry by himself.'

I went back to the mess, and in process of time the others straggled in, thirsting for whiskies-and-sodas, and full of such information as there was to give. Private Harris was not wounded; both the shots had been fired by him, as was testified by the state of his rifle and the fact that two of the cartridges were missing from the packet in his pouch.

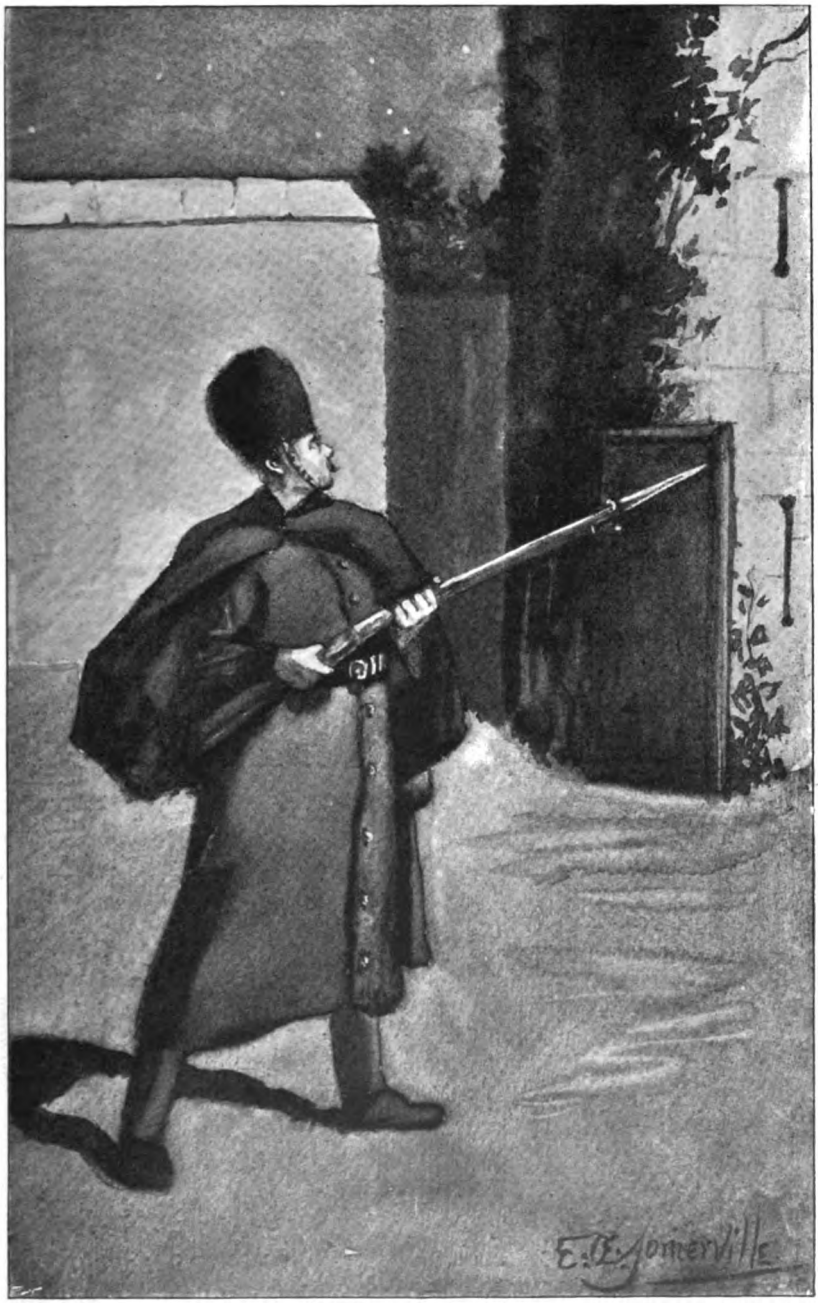
'I hear he was a queer, sulky sort of chap always,' said Tomkinson, the subaltern of the day, 'but if he was having a try at suicide he made a bally bad fist of it.'

'He made as good a fist of it as you did of putting on your sword, Tommy,' remarked Ballantyne, indicating a dangling white strap of webbing, that hung down like a tail below Mr. Tomkinson's mess jacket. 'Nerves, obviously, in both cases!'

The exquisite satisfaction afforded by this discovery to Mr. Tomkinson's brother officers found its natural outlet in a bear fight that threatened to become more or less general, and in the course of which I slid away unostentatiously to bed in Ballantyne's quarters, and took the precaution of barricading my door.

Next morning, when I got down to breakfast, I found Ballantyne and two or three others in the mess-room, and my first inquiry was for Private Harris.

'Oh, the poor chap's dead,' said Ballantyne; 'it's a very queer business altogether. I think he must have been wrong in the top story. The Doctor was with him when he came to out of the fit, or whatever it was, and O'Reilly—that's the Doctor y' know, Irish of course, and, by the way, poor Harris was an Irish-



HE CHALLENGED, AND GOT NO ANSWER

man too—says that he could only jibber at first, but then he got better, and he got out of him that when he had been on sentry-go for about half an hour, he happened to look up at the angle of the barrack wall near where it joins the magazine tower and saw a face looking at him over it. He challenged and got no answer, but the face just stuck there staring at him; he challenged again, and then, as O'Reilly said, he "just oop with his royfle and blazed at it."' Ballantyne was not above the common English delusion that he could imitate an Irish brogue.

'Well, what happened then?'

'Well, according to the poor devil's own story, the face just kept on looking at him and he had another shot at it, and "My God Almighty," he said to O'Reilly, "it was there always!" While he was saying that to O'Reilly he began to chuck another fit, and apparently went on chucking them till he died a couple of hours ago.'

'One result of it is,' said another man, 'that they couldn't get a man to go on sentry there alone last night. I expect we shall have to double the sentries there every night as long as we're here.'

'Silly asses!' remarked Tomkinson, but he said it without conviction.

After breakfast we went out to look at the wall by the magazine. It was about eleven feet high, with a coped top, and they told me there was a deep and wide dry ditch on the outside. A ladder was brought, and we examined the angle of the wall at which Harris said the face had appeared. He had made a beautiful shot, one of his bullets having flicked a piece off the ridge of the coping exactly at the corner.

'It's not the kind of shot a man would make if he had been drinking,' said Moffat, regretfully abandoning his first simple hypothesis; 'he must have been mad.'

'I wish I could find out who his people are,' said Brownlow, the adjutant, who had joined us; 'they found in his box a letter to him from his mother, but we can't make out the name of the place. By Jove, Yeates, you're an Irishman, perhaps you can help us.'

He handed me a letter in a dirty envelope. There was no address given, the contents were very short, and I may be forgiven if I transcribe them:—

'My dear Son, I hope you are well as this leaves me at present, thanks be to God for it. I am very much unaisy about the cow. She swelled up this morning, she ran in and was

frauding and I did not do but to run up for tom sweeney in the minute. We are thinking it is too much lairels or an eirub she took. I do not know what I will do with her. God help one that's alone with himself I had not a days luck since you went away. And so I remain 'YOUR FOND MOTHER.'

'Well, you don't get much of a lead from the cow, do you? And what the deuce is an eirub?'

'It's another way of spelling herb,' I said, turning over the envelope abstractedly. The post-mark was almost obliterated, but it struck me it might be construed into the word Skebawn.

'Look here,' I said suddenly, 'let me see Harris. It's just possible I may know something about him.'

The sentry's body had been laid in the dead-house near the hospital, and Brownlow fetched the key. It was a grim little whitewashed building, without windows, save a small one of lancet shape, high up in one gable, through which a streak of April sunlight fell sharp and slender on the whitewashed wall. The long figure of the sentry lay sheeted on a stone slab, and Brownlow, with his cap in his hand, gently uncovered the face.

I leaned over and looked at it, and as I looked there came back to me the remembrance of a wild, dark face, of the young man who had stood on my wheel shouting to the winning boat at the Lough Lonen Regatta.

'That's enough,' I said; 'I know him.'

THE BANDMASTER OF THE SONS OF LIBERTY

THE
EARLY HISTORY OF THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

BY R. G. GRAHAM

In view of the present widely spread popularity of football, it is curious to note that in 1860, besides the Universities and Public Schools, only two clubs, the Dingley Dell and Crusaders, appeared in the sporting papers as playing first-class matches, and in *The Field* of 1862 hardly any mention is made of the game. The magnitude of the interest in football is now, however, hardly exceeded by that of cricket, which it rivals as a national game. Few of the countless thousands who enjoy it, however, know to whom they are indebted for the possibility of this manly sport becoming what we find it to-day. It is to the founders of, and early workers in, the 'Football Association' that the credit must be given; and a short history of its inception and development should prove of interest.

In the year 1863, John D. Cartwright wrote a series of articles pointing out the impossibility of football clubs being formed, and matches played, by men after leaving school, owing to every school having different rules. He advocated representatives of schools and the universities meeting, to draw up a set of laws for universal adoption, as easy to understand as those of cricket. A meeting took place; but it was found that men were fast wedded to their several systems, and refused to relinquish them or amalgamate with others. Eton thought the Rugby game plebeian, Rugby dubbed the Etonians cowards for not approving of 'hacking.' One set wished to keep the ball on the ground and kick it *through* the goal sticks, whilst others wished to carry it and kick it *over*. Nothing came of the meeting, but the idea having

been started, some metropolitan clubs met together under the presidency of A. Pember of the N. Ns. Kilburn Club, and set to work to draw up a code for universal adoption.

Several clubs existed then, but their matches were of no public interest, owing to the divergence of rules, each having its own 'Laws of the game.' These were based in the main upon those of Rugby, Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and Charterhouse. When arranging a match, the rules under which it should be played had to be settled beforehand. They were usually a compromise, which had the effect of spoiling the play of both, besides being unintelligible to onlookers. The following two letters received by the Hon. Sec. of the Football Association, some time after its formation, but before the rules had been very generally adopted, will serve as an illustration. They were in reply to challenges from the clubs who had joined the Association, to the Universities.

'Exeter College, Oxford.

'Dear Sir,—Having heard from Muir Mackenzie that you are thinking of getting up some football matches at Oxford for the Middlesex Club, I should be most happy to arrange a match on behalf of the Amalgamation Club if you have a vacant day. Our only engagement at present is on November 14. In case the match can be arranged, I should be obliged if you would kindly send me a copy of the rules which you wish to play.

'Believe me, yours truly,

'E. ARMSTRONG.'

'To R. G. Graham, Esq.'

'25 Green Street, Cambridge.

'Dear Sir,—We shall be happy to accept your challenge to play "University *v.* County of Surrey' with a few modifications of what you proposed. We do not like playing fewer than fifteen a side, and could not, I am afraid, play fewer than thirteen. We also prefer playing our own rules, but as the "University" and "the Association" rules have a good deal in common, I dare say, we might very well play the latter.

'Yours truly,

'M. TROTTER, Hon. Sec.

'R. G. Graham, Esq.'

At the meeting of these clubs, it was resolved to form the Football Association, with the object of carrying out the grand idea of framing a code of rules to be universally recognised. All the leading clubs were invited to send representatives to a meeting called in the autumn of 1863 by this Association, to

finally decide what these rules should be. Many signified their intention of supporting the Association in this effort, and attended the meeting.

The old difficulties, however, arose, the chief being as to whether the ball should be carried or not, and tripping, charging, and hacking allowed. Arguments that football should be played with the feet to the exclusion of the hands partially prevailed, in that running with the ball was not permitted. It was also voted that tripping, charging, and hacking might be dispensed with after leaving school. In the end a set of rules was carried by a majority, and a start made. The following were the 'Laws of the game' decided upon. They will be read with interest as the first attempt to conciliate and embrace all football players.

The Laws of the Game

I. The maximum *length of ground* shall be 200 yards, the maximum BREADTH shall be 100 yards; the length and breadth shall be marked off with flags, and the *goals* shall be defined by two upright posts, 8 yards apart, without any tape or bar across them.

II. The winners of the toss shall have the choice of goals. *The game shall be commenced* by a *place kick* from the centre of the ground by the side losing the toss, the other side shall not approach within 10 yards of the ball until it is kicked off.

III. After a goal is won the losing side shall kick off, and goals shall be changed.

IV. A goal shall be won when the ball passes between the goal posts or over the space between the goal posts (at whatever height), not being thrown, knocked on, or carried.

V. When the ball is in TOUCH the first player who touches it shall throw it from the point on the boundary line where it left the ground, in a direction at right angles with the boundary line, and it shall not be in play until it has touched the ground.

VI. When a player has kicked the ball, any one of the same side who is nearer to the opponents' goal line is *out of play*, and may not touch the ball himself nor in any way whatever prevent any other player from doing so until the ball has been played; but no player is out of play when the ball is kicked from behind the goal line.

VII. In case the ball goes behind the goal line, if a player on the side to whom the goal belongs first touches the ball, one of his side shall be entitled to a free kick from the goal line at the

point opposite the place where the ball shall be touched. If a player of the opposite side first touches the ball, one of his side shall be entitled to a free kick (but at the goal only) from a point 15 yards from the goal line, opposite the place where the ball is touched; the opposing side shall stand behind their goal line until he has had his kick.

VIII. If a player makes a *Fair Catch* he shall be entitled to a *Free Kick*, provided he claims it by making a mark with his heel at once; and in order to take such kick he may go as far back as he pleases, and no player on the opposite side shall advance beyond his mark until he has kicked.

IX. No player shall carry the ball.

X. Neither tripping nor hacking shall be allowed, and no player shall use his hands to hold or push his adversary.

XI. A player shall not throw the ball or pass it to another.

XII. No player shall take the ball from the ground with his hands while it is in play under any pretence whatever.

XIII. No player shall wear projecting nails, iron plates, or gutta-percha on the soles or heels of his boots.

Some twenty clubs had announced their intention of joining the Association; but Laws IX. and X. proved too drastic for the Rugbyites as a whole, whilst laws carried in their interest displeased the followers of the other style of games. In the end half this number deserted, which was very discouraging. The few clubs, however, who adopted these rules, arranged matches among themselves, and did all in their power to give publicity to the movement. Those which took the most active part in this were the Barnes, Wanderers, Civil Service, Royal Engineers, N. Ns. Kilburn, Crystal Palace, and Sheffield Football Clubs.

The Barnes Club, recruited from the rowing element and the noted army cramming establishments of Messrs. Baty and Inchbald, was very strong. It was a sporting club in which that good old sportsman J. Johnston, the owner of Pretender, took a great interest, placing his field, opposite his residence, Castelnau House, at its disposal for matches and the club's athletic sports. The latter in those days were very important meetings, a feature being a football race. For this the course was roped, each runner having ten feet between his ropes, with a football at his feet at the starting post. The winner was he who got his ball first past the winning post, without going out of his course. This was to encourage the great art of 'dribbling,' so much more studied in those days before the 'passing' game was possible,

owing to the original 'off-side' rule. To keep the ball for two hundred yards within the ropes, going at anything like racing pace, was no easy matter. In 1867 the committee of this club consisted of Messrs. S. le Blanc Smith, Frampton May, R. W. Willis and R. G. Graham (a very good London rowing club 'four'), with the Marquis of Ely representing Baty's, and Mr. E. C. Morley, the then president of the Football Association. Amongst its best forward players were Lords William and Marcus Beresford. The Wanderers, led by that fine 'back,' Mr. C. W. Alcock, an Old Harrovian, drew their members chiefly from public-school men. To the Sheffield Club, with the active support of Messrs. H. W. Chambers and W. Chesterman, must be given the credit of pioneering the movement out of the London district. In the other clubs Messrs. J. Kirkpatrick and E. Wawn, of the Civil Service, Mr. A. Pember, of the N. Ns. Kilburn, and Mr. W. J. C. Cutbill, of the Crystal Palace, lent valuable aid to the Association. Notwithstanding all efforts, however, the movement did not progress, and at the commencement of the season of 1866–7, three years after its foundation, only the following ten clubs were members:—

Barnes Football Club
Civil Service Football Club
Crystal Palace Football Club
Kensington School Football Club
London Scottish (Rifles) Football Club
N. Ns. Kilburn Football Club
Royal Engineers (Chatham) Football Club
Sheffield Football Club
Wanderers Football Club
Worlabye House (Baty's) Football Club

Great regret was expressed at the annual general meeting that the work of the Association was looked upon with distrust, especially by the public schools, none of which had joined the movement. It was deplored that the officers of the Association had not succeeded in firmly establishing a code of rules which met with universal approbation. Assurance was given that the committee had no selfish feeling in the matter, and would gladly assist in the establishment of one game, from whatsoever source it emanated. Some comfort, however, was taken from the fact that 122 matches, played under their rules, had been reported in the sporting papers in the last three months of 1866. This showed at all events a greatly increased interest in the game of football, and the hope was not abandoned that the desired end might yet be reached. It was, however, recognised that some new departure must be taken, and fresh energy thrown into the cause. With this object, important alterations were made in the 'Laws of the game,' bringing them still more in conformity with

the several 'non-handling' games. The tendency in the alterations already made had been in this direction, the 'free kick' from a 'fair catch' having disappeared, and the 'off-side' law altered, as it now stands. At this meeting, on the proposition of the Wanderers, 'rouges' or 'touches down' were abolished. These allowed a player who touched the ball first behind his opponent's goal line to have a 'free kick' at a goal, at a point fifteen yards from the goal line, opposite where he touched the ball, the opposing side standing behind their goal line. At the instance of the Barnes Club, it was specifically forbidden to 'knock on' the ball. Also to secure a goal, the ball had to pass *under* the tape, instead of 'at whatever height.' These alterations practically brought the laws to what they are at the present day. In the 'Rules of the game' additions have been made to cope with professionals (who did not then exist), and with the magnitude of the business of the Association. The chief alterations in the 'laws' are the introduction of a referee, with power to enforce penalties, the chief being the 'penalty kick,' and the privileges given to the goal-keeper.

It was hoped that these alterations might conciliate many clubs and schools other than those who followed the Rugby game. It had become evident that to amalgamate the two classes was impossible, and the Association decided to throw in its lot entirely with the opponents of Rugby. The work which the hon. sec. now took upon himself was prodigious. He undertook to send out the following circular to every known football club in the United Kingdom, and to undertake the correspondence resulting therefrom.

(Copy of Circular)

The Football Association, 1867

'Dear Sir,—I wish to call your attention to this Association. It has now been in existence for nearly four years, and its rules have had the careful consideration of all the most experienced football players in the Metropolis. The result, after many meetings and much patient labour, is that a code of rules has been formed, at once simple and easy of adoption. They are, as far as possible, free from unnecessary danger, yet retaining all that is most scientific and interesting, in all the diversified games that have been in vogue. I now ask the co-operation of your club in the great object which is so desirable, viz. the establishment of an universal code according to which all matches may be played. If your club is willing to aid the Association, will you

be good enough to authorise me to include it amongst its members, that you may have the power of proposing any amendments in the rules at the next general meeting?

'Yours faithfully,

'R. G. GRAHAM,

'*Hon. Sec. Football Association.*'

This letter aptly describes the ideas and objects of the officers of the Association. The response was gratifying, particularly in the adhesion of the two important public schools, Westminster and Charterhouse. A mass of correspondence fell upon the hon. sec., questions being asked and advice given, together with persuasion that they should help in the great undertaking. New clubs wanted copies of the rules, either to use in their entirety, or as guides to found their own rules upon. These were always sent, and every letter punctiliously answered all over the country. As an instance, Mr. Ernest M. Royds, from the Bank, Rochdale, wrote that a football club was being got up in that town and wanted to see the Association rules. He seemed satisfied with them himself, but his fellow-members 'wanted to know a few more things which the rules didn't mention.' Some of the questions were very amusing, but it seems quite extraordinary how so many doubts could arise about what appeared to be very simple rules. It must be remembered, however, how little the game was played in those days. Mr. J. R. Sturgis, writing from Eton College, said he had given the proposal that Eton should join the Association every consideration, but had come to the conclusion that the rules, though unobjectionable in themselves, were too lax and too simple. They were, however, so similar to the Eton rules, that they could undertake to play them if necessity required. He thought their rules involved so much more science and honest work, that he hoped he should never see any game but the Eton game played there. He concluded by saying he thought the Association a capital institution, and one which tended to increase the importance of football, yet he thought it for the interest of the game to preserve the varied forms of it which existed in the public schools.

Mr. Edward S. Roscoe, writing from Radley College, regretted they could not join, though he wished sincerely all schools would play the same rules. He concluded by saying if Eton, Harrow, and Rugby would give up their separate rules, other schools might be induced to follow their example. Mr. F. Ellis from Rugby declined, owing to the Association rules differing so thoroughly from theirs. He wished, however, a code of rules could be drawn

up which might be used by all playing the Rugby game. He concluded with 'If the Football Association wish to complete thoroughly their good work, they might turn their attention to this subject.' The Association, however, had its hands quite full, and all its energies taxed to carry through the work it had undertaken, which was to form a code to be agreed upon by the majority of clubs who troubled to attend their meetings, and by this means, if possible, to make one general game of football, as cricket was. Mr. W. M. Chinnery promptly wrote that he would bring the matter before his committee of the London Athletic Club, but in the meantime took upon himself to give the name of the club as joining and supporting the Association. Besides direct replies to the circular, letters from country towns in all parts of England came, saying clubs were being formed, but they could not agree upon the rules to be adopted. Could they have a copy of the Association rules and any advice in the matter? Thus, by the publicity given, the hon. sec. of the Association became in the year 1867 a sort of general adviser to the new clubs which were springing up in all directions.

It was really only from this year that the Association established itself as a recognised institution. The result of all the correspondence trebled the list of members, which were made up of the following clubs:

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

List of Members, Jan. 1, 1868

Amateur Athletic Football Club
Barnes Football Club
Bramham College (Yorks) Football Club
Brixton Football Club
Charterhouse School Football Club
C. C. C. Clapham Football Club
Civil Service Football Club
Clifden House (Brentford) Football Club
Cowley School (Oxford) Football Club
Crystal Palace Football Club
Donington Grammar School (Lincolnshire) Football Club
Forest School Football Club
Hitchin Football Club
Holt (Wilts) Football Club
Hull College Football Club
Kensington School Football Club
Leamington College Football Club
London Athletic Football Club
London Scottish (Rifles) Football Club
Milford College (South Wales) Football Club
N. Ns. Kilburn Football Club
Reigate Football Club
Royal Engineers (Chatham) Football Club
Sheffield Football Club
Totteridge Park (Herts) Football Club
Upton Park Football Club
Wanderers Football Club
West Brompton College Football Club
Westminster School Football Club
Worlabye House (Roehampton) Football Club

Though only this number had actually joined, the hon. sec., through his correspondence, was aware of numerous other clubs who were playing the rules.

On October 5, 1867, the Committee of the Association met to congratulate themselves upon the new blood which had been infused into their ranks, and to consider the best means of further promoting its extension during the coming season. With the object of securing the united co-operation of the clubs now playing their rules, and attracting others, it was decided to arrange a county match to be played under the Association Rules. The captains of all the leading clubs were communicated with, in order to obtain their opinions on the subject of the qualification necessary to constitute county players. At a subsequent meeting, on October 14, these opinions having been obtained, it was unanimously resolved that to be a *bonâ fide* representative of a county, a player must have resided three years or have been born in the county. The match decided upon was Middlesex *v.* Surrey and Kent, Mr. C. W. Alcock for the former and Mr. R. G. Graham for the latter being appointed as captains to select the teams. The date fixed was November 2, to take place at Beaufort House, Walham Green. Thoroughly representative teams were secured, and but for the unfortunate occurrence of the ground being withdrawn almost at the last moment, it would have proved in every way a great success. As the first county match which had ever been played at football, it becomes historical. Its effect was greatly to increase the growing interest in the movement of the Association, and a second county match was determined upon between Surrey and Kent. The former was again captained by Mr. R. G. Graham, and the latter by Mr. A. F. Kinnaird, then of Trinity College, Cambridge. Both matches ended in a 'draw,' no goals being obtained. As the first football match of real public importance, the following account, which appeared in the *Field*, is interesting:

MIDDLESEX *v.* SURREY AND KENT

A *bonâ fide* county match is such a complete novelty in the football world, that we can hardly wonder at the numbers who thronged to Beaufort House on Saturday last, the 2nd inst., to witness the inaugurating contest between the above teams, which was advertised to take place on the scene of the last inter-University athletic sports; and we can cordially sympathise with the disappointment they must have felt when they discovered on

their arrival that, in consequence of some unaccountable disagreement between Lord Ranelagh and the hon. secretary of the Amateur Athletic Club, who had let the ground for this occasion, the promoters of the match were, at the eleventh hour, compelled to seek refuge in the wilds of Battersea Park. Shortly after three o'clock the representatives of the rival parties had mustered in good force, and about half-past three o'clock all the preliminaries necessary for the commencement of the game had been settled. The Middlesex men were unfortunate in losing the toss, by which they were compelled to play against the wind; without loss of time, however, the ball was kicked off by the Middlesex captain, and the fight was opened in real earnest. The ground was in a most objectionable state, and totally unfit for football purposes, and the grass, which was several inches in length and extremely thick, effectually prevented all attempts at dribbling, or any exhibition of the quick play which we might have expected from the reputation of many of the players engaged in this contest. Notwithstanding the great difficulty experienced in moving, the game was carried on from the start to the finish with unabated vigour. For the first half-hour the two teams appeared so evenly matched that it was difficult to decide in favour of either as the ball travelled backwards and forwards with each successive rush of the rival players; but during the latter portion of the game the forward play of the Middlesex men exhibited a decided improvement, and the ball, well worked up by J. B. Martin and G. G. Kennedy, was kept up for some time hovering in dangerous proximity to the goal occupied by the United Counties, which was throughout well defended by J. Cockerell and R. W. Willis. In consequence of the length of the grass, which was naturally all in favour of a defensive game, the fire of the Middlesex men proved of no avail, and a well-judged kick by one of the defending goal-keepers carried the ball to P. Rhodes and P. M. Thornton, who, by a splendid run-down, placed the Middlesex goal in great danger, P. Rhodes, by superior speed of foot, having outstripped the last goal-keeper of Middlesex and driven the ball down in front of the hostile goal, which, but for a little over-anxiety and eagerness to secure his prize, must have fallen. The game was soon recommenced, and from this time until the conclusion of the game, the men of Surrey and Kent were closely besieged within their own lines by their opponents, who were, however, unable to achieve any decisive result; and when time was called, the match terminated in a draw, neither side having obtained a goal. This inaugurating contest produced such an exciting game, and proved

such a decided success, that we may look forward to a series of similar friendly meetings between the various counties during the winter months. Football has lately increased to such gigantic dimensions, that it needs something more than ordinary club matches to bring out the rising talent. The names of the players who were engaged in this first contest are a sufficient guarantee that the promoters—who, we are informed, are the officers of the Football Association—desire impartially to perform their duties to select the best players without regard to public schools or especial cliques, and we must congratulate them on the efficient manner in which they have commenced their work. For Middlesex the most conspicuous players were G. G. Kennedy, C. E. B. Nepean, and W. J. Dixon; for Surrey and Kent, P. Rhodes, P. M. Thornton, R. G. Graham (forwards), and J. Cockerell and R. W. Willis in defence of goal did good service. The following is a list of the players :—*Middlesex :* C. W. Alcock (Wanderers), A. Baker (N.N.'s), W. J. Dixon (Old Westminster), G. G. Kennedy (Harrow Chequers), G. H. Lee (Westminster School), J. B. Martin (Crusaders), C. E. B. Nepean (Charterhouse School), J. C. Smith (Westminster School), E. W. Wylde (Old Westminster), H. Emanuel (N.N.'s), and R. C. Thornton (Wanderers). *Surrey and Kent:* J. Cockerell (Crystal Palace), W. J. C. Cutbill (Crystal Palace), C. C. Dacre (Clapham Grammar School), R. G. Graham (Barnes Club), J. Kirkpatrick (Civil Service), W. B. Money (Harrow Chequers), J. K. Barnes, P. Rhodes (Wanderers), F. B. Soden (C.C.C.'s), P. M. Thornton (Wanderers), C. J. Thornton (Eton College), R. M. Thornton, and R. W. Willis (Barnes Club). W. B. Money, owing to an accident, was unable to leave Cambridge, and C. J. Thornton arrived too late, in consequence of the change of ground, to take part in the game.

The following is a list of the players in the second match.—*Kent:* Messrs A. F. Kinnaird (Trin. Coll., Cambridge) (captain), E. Lubbock (West Kent), J. B. Martin (Wanderers), F. G. Paulson (Charterhouse School), E. O. Berens (Crusaders), A. Baker (No Names), W. J. C. Cutbill (Crystal Palace), D. Allport (Crystal Palace) A. C. Chamberlain (Crystal Palace), P. Norman (Old Etonian), E. A. Hoare (St. John's Coll., Cambridge), J. T. Goldney (Old Harrovian). *Surrey :* R. G. Graham (Barnes Club) (captain), J. Cockerell (Crystal Palace), G. C. Dacre (Clapham Grammar School), P. Rhodes (Wanderers), H. Richardson (Reigate Hill Club), F. B. Soden (C.C.C., Clapham), J. E. Tayloe (C.C.C., Clapham), A. Thompson (Wanderers), R. W. Willis (Barnes

Club), J. K. Barnes (Barnes Club), E. C. Morley (Barnes Club), W. Collins (Barnes Club).

These matches had the desired effect of still further calling attention to the work of the Association, and football generally. The fact of two schools, Westminster and Charterhouse, having joined, whilst so many late members of other schools, amongst them the late captains of Eton and Radley Football Clubs, and the Rev. — Thring, of Uppingham, writing, heartily approving of the adoption of the code of rules, gave great impetus to the movement. More clubs were rapidly joining the Association, and new clubs were springing into existence in all directions. It was noted that three hundred matches were chronicled in the sporting papers, against one hundred and twenty-two in the same period of the previous season. The credit was freely given by these newspapers to the unselfish efforts of the officers of the Football Association in endeavouring to concentrate all clubs under one standard. Great enthusiasm was shown at the general meeting in 1868, and it was felt that the time had come to enlarge the number of the Committee. The officers at that time consisted of E. C. Morley, president, elected in 1867 in the place of A. Pember, who had held it from the commencement; R. G. Graham, hon. sec. and treasurer. Committee—C. W. Alcock, W. Chesterman, W. J. C. Cutbill, R. W. Willis.

Of these six officers, half of them were supplied by the Barnes Football Club.

At this meeting their number was doubled. The president, E. C. Morley, and hon. sec. and treas. R. G. Graham, both of the Barnes Club, were re-elected, and the following were the Committee:—C. W. Alcock, Wanderers Football Club; W. Chesterman, Sheffield Football Club; W. J. C. Cutbill, Crystal Palace Football Club; W. J. Dixon, Old Westminster (Flying Dutchman) Football Club; Lord E. Fitzmaurice, Trinity College, Cambridge, Football Club; G. G. Kennedy, Harrow Chequers Football Club; A. F. Kinnaird, Trinity College, Cambridge, Football Club; J. Kirkpatrick, Civil Service Football Club; K. Muir Mackenzie, Balliol College, Oxford, Football Club; R. W. Willis, Barnes Football Club.

The members of this Committee were all men celebrated in the football world, the majority being old public-school men of fame, whose introduction greatly promoted the eagerly desired universal code, from their acknowledged repute and influence as players.

These elections, and a vote of thanks to the hon. secretary

for his energy on behalf of the Association, constituted the proceedings, no alterations having been made in the rules. At a Committee meeting in October 1868, several more important matches were arranged between counties, London and the Universities, and London and Sheffield. The sanction of the Committee was also given to the publication of a work on football, entitled 'John Lillywhite's Football Annual.' From this time the success of the Football Association was assured, and its progress continued by leaps and bounds, until the first idea of its promoters was practically achieved. Not absolutely, for there were still clubs playing the 'handling' game. It gradually dawned upon them that, if their game was to continue to exist, they must follow in the footsteps of the Association, and collect all their forces under one banner. With this object, in the year 1871, eight years after the formation of the Association, the Football Rugby Union came into existence on the lines of the Football Association. These two institutions soon embraced all the Football players of the United Kingdom. Thus, though one general code of rules for universal adoption was not realised, two codes were, solely by the efforts and example of the Football Association, brought into existence and universally adopted. The result is known by everyone, though few have any idea of the struggles against prejudice, and even ridicule, which the small body who formulated and worked at the idea had to contend with, to enable football to become a national game. This object has long since been attained, but how many of the millions who now enjoy football matches know to whom they are indebted for the possibility of those matches taking place? It is to the originators and early workers in the Football Association; and to them a debt of gratitude is due from the Sporting World.

SOME GERMAN AND RUSSIAN STUDS

BY F. WRENCH

(*Irish Land Commissioner*)

WHEN any one in Ireland wishes to describe particularly a fine pair of carriage horses, he generally says horses 'such as one sees in the carriages of the Lord Lieutenant,' and no doubt our Viceroy's horses are about as good as they can be for the purpose. I had learnt from some of the London dealers that these horses came from North Germany, but was never able exactly to locate the spot. I also heard, when in Hungary and Austria, that some of the finest cavalry horses in the world were bred in East Prussia. At last I have had the pleasure of verifying both statements, when travelling through some of the fine horse-breeding districts of that province. Three of the great studs in Germany which I was recommended to visit were Celle, near Hanover; Graditz, for thoroughbreds only; and Trakehnen. Of the latter, I shall try to give a somewhat full description.

Celle is a quaint old town with a decidedly English look about it, and reminds one of some of the old market towns in Yorkshire. The stud buildings, situated just at the end of the town, are thoroughly practical and comfortable, and beautifully kept, not a straw being out of place. The stud consists of 250 stallions; fourteen of these are thoroughbred, and all the rest half-bred Hanoverian. A half-bred sire is often the produce of a thoroughbred stallion and Hanoverian mare, who may have in her back breeding other indirect thoroughbred crosses; but these are not many, and in some cases there is no thoroughbred blood to be found on the pedigree cards at the foot of each stall, though the names of both Irish and Yorkshire half-bred horses

appear in a few instances. The regular Hanoverian type is a dark-brown or chestnut placid-looking harness horse, standing at least 16–1, with great limbs, a good look-out, with a fairly good back, and long enough to fill any harness. He is essentially a carriage horse, but with no particular action to boast of. The half-breds are let to the people at a service fee of twelve and a half marks,[1] with an extra ten marks if there is a foal; the thoroughbreds are let at seventeen marks, with a like extra charge on a foal being born. Among the thoroughbreds are some born at Graditz, some purchased in France, for which I did not much

HANOVERIAN STALLION KINSKY, BY KINGDOM

care, and two very fine old horses and good sires, Kingdom, by Kingcraft, and Adeptus, by Adonis. This is one of the largest stallion depôts in Germany, and nowhere can the Hanoverian horse be seen to better advantage, as the stallions of their breed are a well-selected, well-matched, and fine lot of horses.

Graditz is within easy reach of Berlin, situated within a short distance of the interesting old town of Torgau on the Elbe, and it is on some of the meadows along the banks of that river that the horses have their best grazing; but I was not struck with Graditz as a specially good place for growing young animals.

[1] 1 Mark = 2*s*.

The paddocks are much too dry and sandy, and though excellent crops appear to be grown there, and a bountiful harvest was being reaped, it is not the soil for really good grassland.

The stud consists of fifty-three very carefully selected thoroughbred mares, most of them with plenty of bone and size, and five thoroughbred stallions, among them being the recently purchased Australian-bred Carnage, the Irish-bred Delphos, old Flageolet, and the famous St. Gatien. Almost the handsomest foals, however, that I saw there, were by Matchbox, now standing at Kisber in Austria. Count Lehndorff, whose fame as one of

THE HOUSE IN WHICH FREDERICK THE GREAT LIVED

the highest authorities on horse-flesh is world-wide, lives a good deal at Graditz in a charming old hunting lodge, and the arrangements of the yards and boxes, paddocks, and notably the boxes for sick horses, are almost as perfect as it is possible to make them.

Trakehnen is altogether different from any stud I have seen in Germany, and is historically most interesting. It was founded in the year 1732 by Frederick the Great, who inherited it from his father, and improved it very much, living there a great deal in a picturesque old house now occupied by the chief veterinary-surgeon, and planting some wonderful avenues of oaks, which have grown into exceedingly fine trees, and are quite a feature of the

place. Frederick the Great bequeathed the stud to the State, with the proviso that the Kings of Prussia should every year have the right to take forty of the best horses at a nominal sum—a right that is strictly exercised at the present day, as the Trakehnen horses are much prized by the Emperor, than whom no one more thoroughly appreciates having in his carriages, horses that can go both far and fast.

In the centre of the estate, which comprises some 4,150 hectares,[1] is situated the charming residence of the director, Captain Von Oettingen, the hotel, post-office, stallion stables, exercising yards for young horses, a house with room for some sixty grooms, and most of the chief buildings in connection with the stud in general. The estate is divided into twelve farms, on each of which, though differing somewhat in size, a complete set of most substantial red brick buildings is placed, with an excellent manager's house, and big yards and boxes, for the economical working of a stud farm and agricultural farm combined. Some idea of the size of the undertaking may be formed when it is mentioned that the hands ordinarily employed number 2,600.

Trakehnen is situated at the extreme north-east corner of Prussia within a few miles of the Russian frontier, in one of the finest agricultural and pastoral districts to be seen in Germany. It was said to have been originally a marshy moor, but is now divided into large flat arable fields and excellent pastures, and is kept in a high state of productive power by the best system of cultivation, and the application of lime to the grasslands. It is worth a passing notice that as Ireland was originally the home of the elk, so was Trakehnen famed for that animal, and an elk's horn is the Trakehnen brand placed upon all horses that are bred there. The estate has still some stretches of woodland abounding in roe-deer, which may be frequently seen grazing in the same fields as the horses; excellent roads run for miles under the noble avenues, and the care with which everything is managed is everywhere manifest.

In Frederick the Great's time the stud was chiefly kept to produce horses for the Court, and it was not until the end of his reign that the further development took place of using some of the stallions, that were not considered good enough for the King's stud, for the mares of the country people, such favourable results ensuing that the question of establishing stations for Government stallions throughout the country soon demanded the attention of the authorities. The stud passed through many

[1] A hectare = nearly 2½ acres, or to be accurate—2·471 acres.

vicissitudes. During the war troubles in 1806 it was removed bodily to Russia, and many mares were lost, owing to the cold and severity of the march, both at that time and at a later period in 1813 in the flight to Silesia. It was not until after the wars were over that the stud settled down again to a state of normal development, and Herr Von Burgsdorff was enabled to attempt the dream of his life, which was to breed stallions that should be capable of producing horses fit for the German cavalry.[1] Previously to that the remounts were largely purchased in Russia, Hungary, and Denmark. In its early history, much Arabian and

ONE OF THE FARM TEAMS DRAWING IN A LOAD OF HAY

Eastern blood had been introduced into the stud; later some of the best strains of English thoroughbred blood were used, but now the stud is essentially one of half-breds, though a few thoroughbred stallions are always kept to maintain a high standard of quality, that essential requisite in every good horse.

The stud-book for the East Prussian horses was originated many years ago, and is now, from the full information it gives, one of the most perfect stud-books in existence. The stud in its present state consists of 16 stallions, 4 of them being thoroughbred and the rest half-bred, rather over 400 mares,

[1] Some of these details were gleaned from Dr. Pusch's interesting little book on the State Studs of Germany.

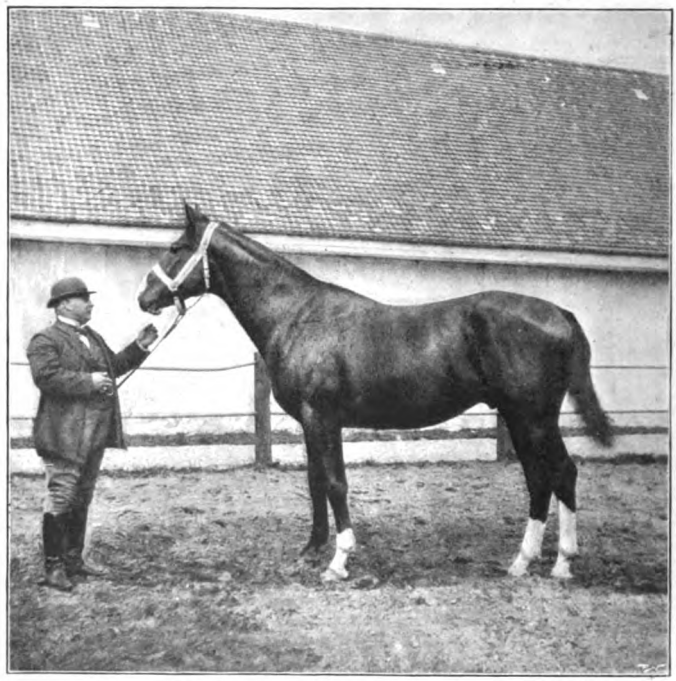
divided into groups according to their colour and size; 84 two-year-old colts, 109 yearling colts, 122 yearling fillies, the foals of this year, 274 working horses, which make, with three-year-olds and four-year-olds, a total of 1,548. A commission of five, of which Count Lehndorff is the President, sits every year at Trakehnen, and carefully examines all the three-year-old stallions, rejecting all those that are not considered good enough for stud purposes, and a similar weeding out of the mares is made by the director of the stud. All the rejected animals, and those it is intended to dispose of, are sold by auction on the first Wednes-

THE BLACK TRAKEHNEN STALLION FENISSER, TEN YEARS OLD

day of May at Trakehnen, the purchasers for the most part being officers, and horse-breeders, and farmers in the neighbourhood. There are fine training grounds on some of the farms; all the animals are broken when they are about two and a half years old, those alone that stand training being kept, and they are further tested in Government races for half-breds, which are held at Königsberg.

The stallions were a good lot, two of the thoroughbreds especially showing great quality; but it is with the half-breds or, as it may now be termed, the pure Trakehnen horse, that I especially wish to deal. Most of these are black, and a smaller number chestnuts and bays. Taking a horse called 'Fenisser' as a type of

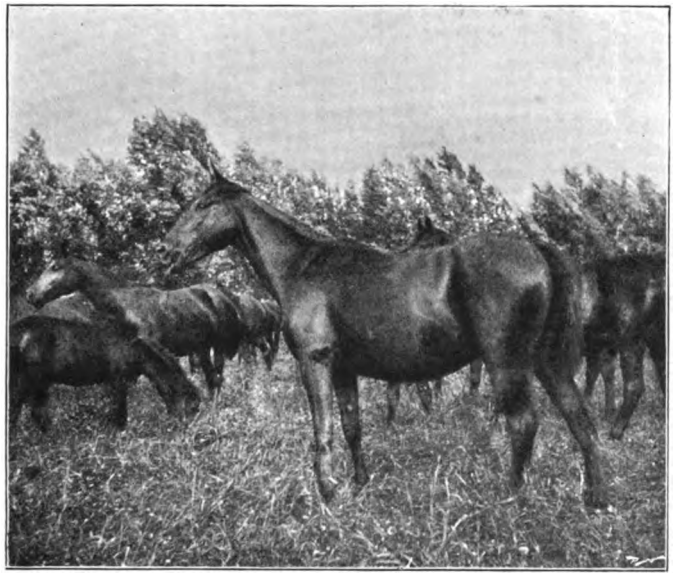
stallion, I can best describe him as a long low black horse, about 16 hands high, with the best of limbs, and a beautiful head, neck, and shoulder, a trifle long in the back according to English ideas, but a valuable stamp of horse, especially for harness purposes. It is difficult to criticise the German cavalry horses; but after watching a great number in the strongly fortified and garrisoned towns of Posen, Thorn, and Königsberg, I came to the conclusion that their chief fault is being rather long and slack behind the saddle, with their hind legs not quite enough under



THE CHESTNUT TRAKEHNEN STALLION MORGENSTRAHL, A WINNER, TWO YEARS OLD

them. Possibly a German critic would find very much the same faults with our cavalry horses. To an English eye, too, they look to be unusually quiet and wanting in spirit. By some it is said that the spirit has been drilled out of them; but I am inclined to think that the quietness is inherited, and in all the foreign studs that I have seen, except in Russia, one may walk about unconcernedly among a group of a hundred young horses, and push them out of your way or handle them just as you like, without the slightest fear of a kick.

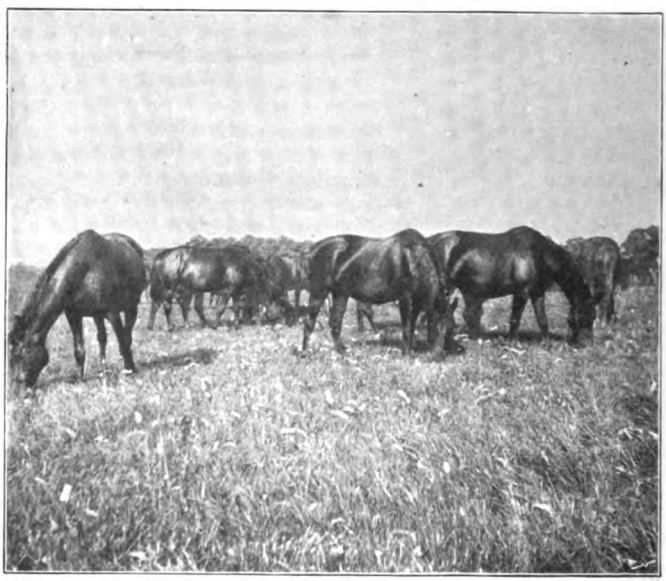
But to return to Trakehnen. The mares are what give it its justly earned fame, and I cannot imagine a sight more calculated to delight the soul of a lover of horse-flesh than to gaze on a group of 110 beautiful black mares herded by mounted guardians on their fine pastures, so like each other that it is hard to distinguish one from the other, about 16 hands high, with just those shapes we look for in a brood mare, and all bred true to type. Then, again, but little behind them in size, come a beautiful group of seventy chestnut mares, perhaps showing a trifle more quality than the blacks, if not quite so true to type, and all said to possess the blood of Stockwell in their pedigrees. Then a lot of



THE BLACK MARES OF TRAKEHNEN

seventy bays, and two groups of about eighty each of mixed colours. The first, called the big riding mares, are a fine lot of sixteen-hand mares, and should breed high-class chargers and cavalry horses; the next are a smaller lot from 15·1 to 15·2, again of all colours, and show a good deal more quality, but are still inclined to be a trifle long in the back. Thus are the matrons of the Trakehnen stud divided, and I do not think there exists in any stud in Europe a more beautiful lot of mares than the blacks and the chestnuts, the impression left on my mind being that if the stallions were as exceptionally good the Trakehnen horses would be hard to beat.

It is needless to say that such a stud, established for so many years in a rich horse-breeding district, has been productive of immense good; and whereas Germany was formerly driven to seek in other countries the main supply of its cavalry horses, now out of the 10,000 annually required by the German army, 6,000 are bought in East Prussia alone, chiefly from the farmers. Huge horse fairs are held at Gumbinnen and other places in the province, whence come many of the best carriage horses now seen in London, the farmers finding that the production of horses is a profitable adjunct to their other business, and realising from 40*l.* to 100*l.* for unbroken three-year-old colts.

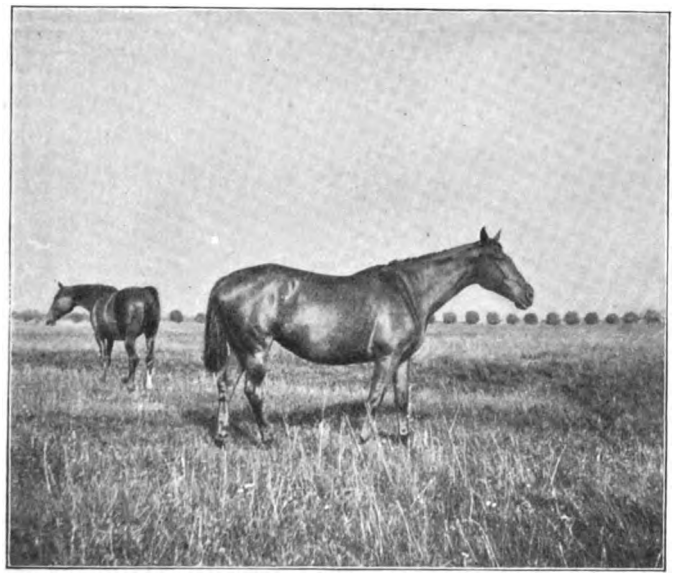


ANOTHER GROUP OF BLACK MARES

This is not to be wondered at with Trakehnen as a fountain head, and four depôts for stallions in East Prussia at Insterburg, Gudwallen, Rastenburg, and Braunsberg, with each from 160 to 200 stallions, of which the country people have the use at practically nominal fees. This system applies all over Germany, and 2,700 stallions are thus located in different parts of the country.

As far as I have been able to learn, State assistance towards horse-breeding in Russia is not conducted on at all the same scale; for while the State stud of Harkov, near Moscow, is said to be a fine one and the best in Russia, it is not described as in any

way equal to the State studs of Germany and of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, I can only speak of what I actually saw. In the essentially Russian town of Vilna I inspected a small depôt of some sixty stallions kept in very poor stables in the town. Every facility was afforded to me to see them, but I was not allowed to take any photographs, which appeared to convey an element of danger to the Russian official mind. With the exception of three grey Orloff stallions, a more mixed lot it has never been my fortune to come across. Suffolk punches, Clydesdales, Belgian horses, Oldenburgs, Russian, Anglo-Arabs,

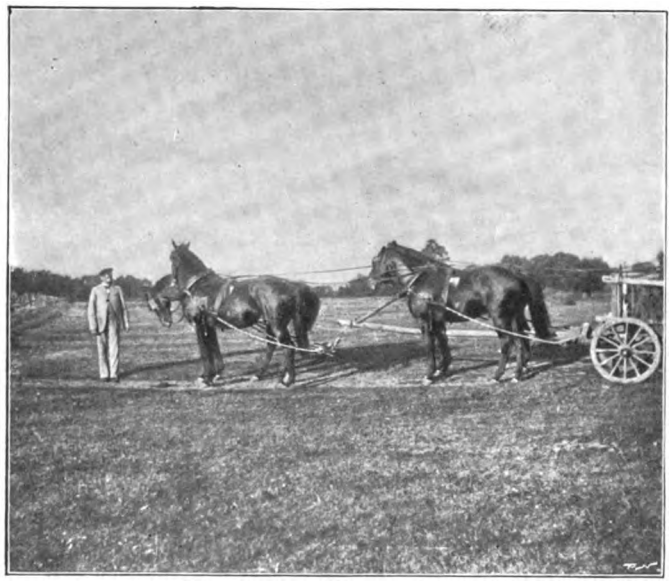


TWO CHESTNUT MARES, THAT IN THE FOREGROUND THE DAM OF MORGENSTRAHL

and what were called English horses, but which I had no wish to claim as my countrymen, were all standing together, some of them obviously unsound. The Orloffs were fine horses, notably one old horse standing fully 16·1 and measuring a fair 8¾ below the knee; he went at a good swinging pace, and must have been a fine sire for carriage horses. But I heard here what I have heard from many Russians, that although there are some very good old Orloff stallions left, the breed is decidedly deteriorating from the recent fashion of crossing everything with imported blood, many of these imported horses being the rejected of our racing stables and not fit for sires. This seems a

pity, as although they have their faults, such as not the best of legs and light barrels, the Orloffs are undoubtedly a fine type of harness horse, and being originally founded by crossing Arab stallions on Russian mares, followed by a considerable amount of inbreeding, have a good foundation to start on.

Very different is the State stud of Janov, situated within a twenty-mile drive of the picturesque town of Biala, which can be reached in a few hours' journey from Warsaw, and where I had the pleasure of taking a photograph of Galtee More in his Russian home. Driving through Biala on a fête day, the quaint market square was crowded with peasants in their bright costumes,



FOUR-IN-HAND OF HALF-BRED RUSSIAN STALLIONS

and the country, with its frequent Polish villages of long lines of wooden houses, was full of interest during the entire twenty miles between Biala and Janov, which distance our hardy little horses covered in a very short time without once drawing rein or breaking from a smart trot. This stud, founded some thirty or forty years ago, is now under the admirable management of Count Nierod, assisted by Dr. Eduard Land, who is certain, so far as he is concerned, to have everything carried out in a thoroughly practical manner. The stud consists of eleven high-class and exceedingly well-shaped thoroughbred stallions, full of our best English blood, and let out to horse-breeders at varying

fees from 50*l.* for Galtee More, down to 5*l.* Fifteen thoroughbred mares, fifty half-bred mares, and twenty-two thoroughbred stallions and eighty half-bred stallions let out to the peasants at fees varying from one to three or four roubles;[1] here, again the half-bred horses are the feature of the stud, and more good half-bred stallions could be taken from this one stud than could, I venture to say, be found in the whole of Ireland.

All the arrangements are thoroughly practical, with a most admirably arranged hospital set apart for horses suffering from any kind of ailment, and the whole stud is located in a position of considerable natural beauty. The buildings, by no means

A RUSSIAN CAVALRY SOLDIER

unsightly in themselves, are surrounded with pleasant and well-shaded paddocks, and we drove through some really fine woodland ranges of grass land, with a handsome team of four half-bred bay stallions, often at a hand gallop, in search of the half-bred mares that were roaming there at will. The foals and yearlings struck me as slightly small, but I fancy that it takes time for Russian horses to develop. Almost the best yearlings I saw were the produce of Kalmuck mares from the Caucasus crossed with a thoroughbred stallion; these showed every bit as much quality as the thoroughbreds, with beautiful heads and legs like steel.

[1] A rouble = 2*s.* 2*d.*

The half-bred stallions, which are a fine stamp of horse, mostly bay or brown, with good action and plenty of bone, are much appreciated by the peasants, and are said to produce excellent results when crossed with their little mares. The horses of the Polish peasants appear to be singularly good, having a large admixture of Arab blood, showing much more quality, and possessing much better legs than those to be found in the hands of the peasants in Russia proper. I was not impressed with the Russian cavalry horses, although shown over a stable belonging to the Guards, who pay 30*l.* per horse, whereas 15*l.*

TWO COSSACKS

is all that is allowed for the ordinary remount. The Russian cavalry horse, as I saw him, is bad in the back and lacks quality, and though said to live on very little during a campaign, does not look nearly equal to the half-breds that are now being produced in increasing numbers, owing to the greater care that is being taken to assist horse-breeders. However, with such a material as is at hand in the Polish peasants' mares, it would not be hard for the Russian Government to raise the standard of its cavalry horses. No one who has not been to Moscow and the Caucasus can, I feel sure, give any description that is worth having of the horse material in Russia, and it is thither I should go if really anxious to learn the history of the Russian horse.

The hardy little horses of the Cossacks, brought with them from the Steppes, I have not dealt with, as I did not see them in sufficient numbers; but they are said to carry their picturesque riders marvellous distances, and, as they cost the Government only 120 roubles a year for their keep, cannot be said to be an expensive addition to the Russian cavalry.

In visiting these foreign studs, where there is so much to learn, one idea must constantly recur to any one who lives in Ireland, and that is, why do we not produce from the material we have there the best half-bred horse in the world as a stud horse? The

A RUSSIAN PEASANT'S CART

Irish hunter is known in every part of Europe as the best type of saddle horse, and yet at the present time he is only a chance-bred animal. In every other country where the interests of horse-breeders are looked after, it is to the production of the half-bred horse that most attention is paid, it being admitted that the thoroughbred, produced only for the one purpose of racing, cannot naturally fulfil all other necessary requirements. That a first-class thoroughbred stallion is the best of all horses goes without saying, but such animals are few and far between and cost much money. In other countries the half-bred horse of various kinds has been graded up until he has become a fixed type, in most cases boasts of a stud-book, and can be trusted to reproduce himself.

England has its Hunters' Improvement Society and its several distinct breeds with their stud-books; why should not Ireland have its special breed of hunters? I ventured to suggest this more fully nearly five years ago in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*, and everything I have seen or heard since then only confirms me in the view that a valuable opportunity for Ireland is being lost. With hundreds of cart-horse, half-bred cart-horse, and nondescript stallions standing in the country,[1] and the growing importation of American horses, until he has a stud-book of his own, an Irish hunter may be a mixture of every conceivable breed,

RUSSIAN COACHMAN WITH COAT LIKE A PADDED DRESSING-GOWN GATHERED IN AT THE WAIST

and has no protection of any real value. With a promised grant towards the improvement of horses in Ireland, with the material still left in the country, and the finest breeding grounds to be found in Europe, is it not possible to make a beginning, even though we may be somewhat late in doing so?

The Dublin Society has established an admirable register of thoroughbred stallions, which is the first step accomplished. With substantial premiums for mares of known breeding in the hunter-

[1] In 1896, out of a total of 2,387 stallions in Ireland in the hands of private owners, 827 were returned as draught, half-bred draught, and nondescript, so that one-third of the stallions in the country were more or less cart horses, Clydesdale blood being very prevalent. In 1893 the figures were much the same.

breeding counties, it should not be difficult to start a register of mares, and from them to set about breeding the hunter stallions of the future, which, followed by prizes in the Royal Dublin and other shows for Irish-bred hunters with registered pedigrees, would soon create an impression. It is also probable that hunter mares of ascertained pedigrees would fetch larger prices than mares without this advantage.

I do not pretend in these cursory remarks to sketch any definite plan; all I venture to assert is that if some such step is not taken, and some strong inducement is not held out to make it worth while for breeders to keep the good mares in the country, the Irish hunter will not occupy the place he is entitled to, or attract the buyers that he could attract as a stud horse. In several places abroad during the last ten years I have heard complaints of lack of quality and evident traces of cart-horse blood in recent importations from Ireland, and have letters in my possession from keen observers at our horse shows to the same effect; while I regret to say that in one case a foreign buyer who has tried Irish remounts for some years told me that he had decided in future to purchase in Hungary.

The Irish hunter is rightly classed as the horse *par excellence* of Ireland, but this does not and cannot prevent the people of that country from breeding other horses, suitable to the market requirements, to the several conditions of the different localities, and to the needs and pockets of the breeders; and it is for these, as well as for other reasons previously given, that the Irish hunter needs some special effort to be made on his behalf, and that attention should not solely be concentrated upon the multiplication of thoroughbred sires. This is altogether apart from the question of breeding thoroughbred stock, in which Ireland has had phenomenal success within the last few years.

I cannot close this article without expressing my grateful appreciation of the kindness I everywhere received in Germany, whether looking at horses or in investigating some agricultural questions in which I was interested.

Whether in the charming household of Captain Von Oettingen, or in the homesteads of German farmers, with whom I afterwards stayed, the same feeling was always manifest—no mere politeness, but a pleasant determination to give an Englishman a hearty welcome, and to place him on the footing of an old friend. While at Warsaw nothing could exceed the trouble taken by some Polish gentlemen to enable me to see everything in that neighbourhood to the best advantage.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOX-HUNTING

BY C. E. A. L. RUMBOLD

It is not a little curious to reflect that, although hunting as a form of recreation had existed from Saxon times, it was not until the eighteenth century had run about half its course that the pursuit of the fox was looked upon as a regular sport. Prior to this, the stag and hare were the principal beasts of the chase, while foxes were only regarded as vermin, and exterminated accordingly; though no doubt, when opportunity offered, they were occasionally hunted. In fact, from old chronicles it would appear that some of the early sportsmen hunted stag, hare, and fox with the same hounds, selecting the quarry which was most convenient. The reason that the fox was not more generally chased is apparent: in the first place, he was of no use for the table, and, as far as sport was concerned, a straight-necked fox would have afforded little fun, for if fairly hunted he would soon have run the hounds of the period out of scent; nor were riders or horses much used to cross-country work. Moreover, as he was a destructive animal, it was no doubt thought best to put him out of the way as quickly as possible, and for this purpose the most convenient, if to our modern ideas the most unsportsmanlike, means were employed.

But, as horses and hounds improved, men began to change their ideas, and it at length dawned upon them that a fox was an animal capable of showing a vast deal of sport. The progress made was, nevertheless, very slow until the present century had almost opened. In the interval, however, several fox-hunting establishments came into existence, and Beckford's 'Thoughts upon Hunting,' published in 1781, marked a new era in the history of the sport; for it was the first work that treated the subject with

anything like knowledge, judgment, and detail, according to the views we hold at the present time; in fact, most of his book is as much to the point now as when it was originally published. It was Beckford who first cast an intelligent light on 'the noble science,' and, taking into consideration the general state of hunting in England when his work saw the light, many of his views must be regarded as quite twenty years in front of his time. Beckford, who was a man of considerable culture, proved to the world in general that an ardent fox-hunter might also be a person of refinement and education. For it must be remembered that the followers of the chase were looked down upon in his day by the intellectually minded dwellers in the towns, and regarded as clownish and boorish creatures, of whom Squire Western was a fair type. It is curious to note that this belief lasted in some instances until the beginning of the present century, and is mentioned by the Hon. Grantley Berkeley in 'Reminiscences of a Huntsman.'

Before Beckford's time, fox-hunting was for the most part carried on in a very informal manner, and confined exclusively to the country gentry, their neighbours and friends. Often the hunting days were scarcely even prearranged; men set out when the whim took them, or as convenience or expediency dictated. A considerable number of the packs were trencher-fed; in fact, in many instances no real pack could be said to exist—one was got together on the spur of the moment. For instance, it might come to the ears of one of the country squires of the day that a fox had been making sad havoc among the lambs or poultry on one of his farms; he would at once send round to his neighbours, asking them to meet him at a selected spot on the following morning, and to bring with them what hounds they could collect, so that with his own a pack might be formed. It should be remembered that the hounds then used were mostly slow, heavy, and bell-tongued, the sort that on getting to the line of a fox would show their pleasure by sitting down and howling, instead of getting forward with the characteristic dash of the modern fox-hound. The time of day usually selected for the start was at or about sunrise, and the season of the year was scarcely taken into consideration. They did not begin to draw for the fox as we do now, simply endeavouring to hit off the line that he took after his midnight marauding. They would then work up to his lair, and he, after his overnight carousals, not being in a condition to run far, would often fall an easy victim to the perseverance of the pack. If the fox succeeded in getting to

ground, he would be dug out and killed, though it is only fair to suppose that in those days there were many more stub-bred foxes than there are now, and that earthstopping was not then usually an important factor in the business of the chase. Even when an organised pack of hounds was kept, the hunting days

SHOWING THEIR PLEASURE

were seldom or never fixed far beforehand, and as the field consisted chiefly of the local landowners, their friends, their guests, and a few farmers, there was no overcrowding.

No one made any attempt to ride to hounds as we do now; there was no occasion for hurry, as the hounds *hunted*, and did

not race down their quarry. In fact, the underbred and badly conditioned hunters of the day could not have kept up with hounds that went at any great pace.

As the eighteenth century gradually drew to its close, things began to improve, especially in the Midlands and the more suitable hunting districts; for horse and hound breeding came to be better understood, and fox-hunting at last began to take rank as one of the great national pastimes. During the latter half of that century agriculture also underwent great changes, for more land came into cultivation, and in many districts the face of the country was quite altered; hedges grew across what had hitherto been waste moorland, and on soil that had previously been devoted to rabbit warrens. It is recorded that in 1750 there were only three or four fences in the thirty miles between Horncastle and Brigg, but the next fifty years witnessed a new state of affairs, as the more scientific principles of farming became better understood.

It was not, however, until the beginning of the present century that the modern style of riding to hounds was generally adopted, although in the shires it came into vogue during the latter part of Mr. Meynell's mastership of the Quorn, which office he held from 1753 to 1800. It is said that Lord Sefton, who followed Mr. Meynell as master of that famous pack, was the first to introduce the custom of second horses. Fox-hunting steadily went ahead until 1840, when, as far as pure sport is concerned, it probably reached its zenith, at any rate in the best hunting countries.

Discarding, as perhaps somewhat untrustworthy, the accounts of runs then enjoyed, let us consider the advantages and disadvantages that fox-hunters at that time possessed compared with the condition of affairs in our own days, so that we can thereby gauge the quality of the sport which probably fell to their lot. In the first place, hounds and horses were very nearly, if not quite, as good performers as they are at present. Only the main lines of railways then existed, so that England was not in those days covered with the perfect network of lines that at present exists. This was a manifest advantage. Again, the land was not drained to the extent it is now; chemical manures had not come into fashion; consequently it is only reasonable to suppose that the hunting countries in general carried a better scent. Moreover, barbed wire was a thing unknown, while the absence of advanced railway facilities prevented the rise of the modern shooting tenant, who is as a rule anything but an ardent fox-preserver. The conditioning of horses and hounds, thanks to 'Nimrod's' writings, was also

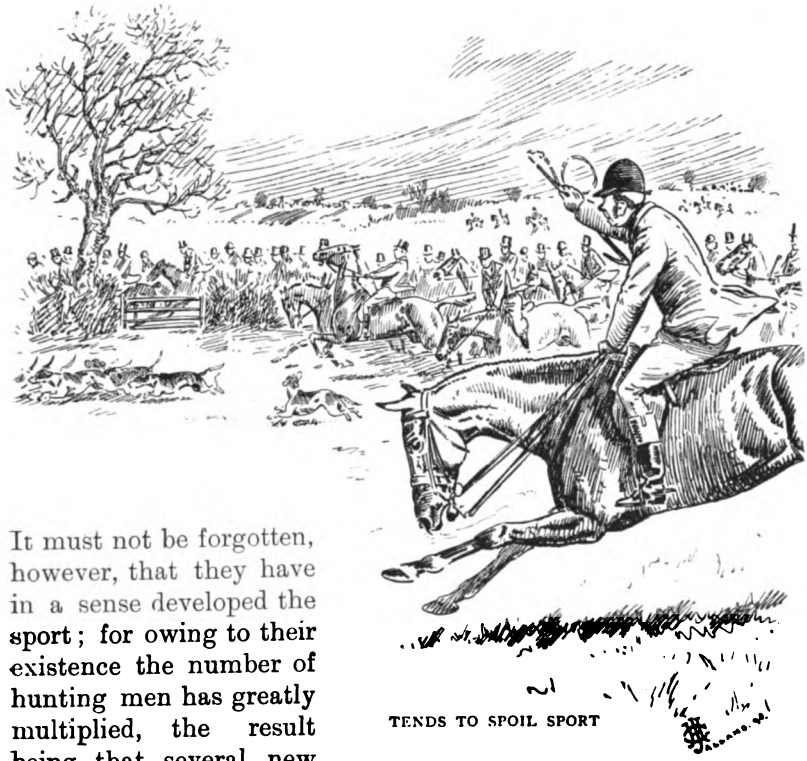
nearly as well understood then as it is to-day—indeed, it can be safely said that the science of the sport has not advanced much during the last sixty years. The foxes, too, were wilder, for the country generally was not in that developed state that it is at the present time. No doubt the personal comfort of the fox-hunter, his own equipment and that of his horse, have undergone considerable improvement; but, as far as actual sport was concerned, this would not make much difference. Taking all these things into consideration, it is only fair to assume that better sport was

'AS GOOD PERFORMERS AS THEY ARE NOW'

enjoyed in those countries where good hunting establishments existed than is the case in these days.

The rapid advance of railways marked a new era in the history of the chase, and was accompanied by the most far-reaching consequences, especially in relation to the development of the pastime. As far as pure sport is concerned, railways had a very evil influence in many ways. They caused people to circulate more freely about the country in general; and houses, villages, and even towns sprang up in districts that had previously been given up to agriculture and fox-hunting. This opening up of the country tended to make foxes less wild than formerly, and straight runs became consequently more difficult to obtain. Men living in London

and the large towns in the Midlands were, by means of the railway, able to hunt in the more popular countries, and the fields of the most favoured hunts have become swelled to an enormous extent, which, of course, tends to spoil sport. Further, would-be sportsmen who lived in towns, and who had no knowledge of country life and pursuits, were enabled to rent shootings, often in the heart of hunting countries, with the result that foxes have in many districts become scarce. These are a few of the evils that railways have brought in their wake as regards fox-hunting.



TENDS TO SPOIL SPORT

It must not be forgotten, however, that they have in a sense developed the sport; for owing to their existence the number of hunting men has greatly multiplied, the result being that several new hunts have been formed, while the subscription lists of nearly all the older ones have become larger. This, combined with the increased facilities that the railways gave for the more general interchange of ideas, and the conveniences offered in relation to the breeding of hounds and horses, has brought the hunting establishments of England up to a more all-round level of excellence. The general effect of railways on fox-hunting may be briefly summarised by the remark that, while they have increased the quantity of the sport, they have decreased its quality.

In some ways fox-hunting can be said never to have reached a greater state of prosperity than at the present time, and to be still on the up grade; for the number of men who hunt continues to increase: one constantly hears of new packs being established, and very few of the names of the older ones drop out of the list. Still, behind this superficial prosperity the noble sport has many enemies, whose numbers are apparently augmented as time rolls on.

TEMPORARILY INSANE

The rising generation of fox-hunters is apt to consider that some of the knotty problems that at present surround the sport are of very modern birth; but this is not the case. For instance, the fox and pheasant question is one of ancient date, although it did not prove to be a very aggravated one until comparatively recent years. Again, wire fencing began to cause trouble even as far back as the middle of the century, and in the year 1863 a circular on the subject was issued to the farmers of the shires by about fifty of the most influential sportsmen of the neighbourhood,

including the Duke of Rutland, the Earls Spencer, Listowel, Eglinton, Lords Bateman, Curzon, Gardner, Ingestre, Sir Charles Isham, Sir John Trollope, Sir W. Hartopp, Messrs. Villiers, Cust, Isted, Stirling Crawfurd, Rainald Knightley, and Whyte Melville. To take another example, at the present time the relations between fox-hunters and farmers are, as a rule, excellent, and this is indeed pleasant to record, for without the co-operation of the latter the sport would speedily come to an end. This statement is easily proved, for towards the end of the twenties Grantley Berkeley was compelled to give up hunting in the Harrow country, owing to the fierce opposition he encountered from the farmers; so that we see the question of trespass in a serious form is one that dates back far into the past.

Although at the present time so many people join in the chase, and a great deal of literature is published about hunting, both in the sporting and even in the daily press (a true sign of its great development), yet 'the man in the street' does not seem to have grasped the most rudimentary elements of hunting. This is the more surprising as the sport is represented pictorially in many different ways. One often hears the most curious remarks made on the subject, while, should a hunting man be personated on the stage elsewhere than at the leading theatres, where the manager has opportunity to secure expert advice, his 'get-up' is invariably peculiar, to say the least of it. It is, however, not only among town-bred people that some of the first principles of hunting are misunderstood; we also have examples of it every day in the field, and even some men who come out pretty often, at times display a remarkable ignorance of the subject. I verily believe that there are people who become temporarily insane directly they view a fox; for we constantly see men who ought to know better give a view holloa right in a fox's face, and the last thing they consider is whether the animal they have seen is the hunted fox or not. Farm labourers are often great sinners in this respect; but now that nearly everything is taught at Board schools, perhaps we shall hear of some rudimentary instruction being given about England's noblest sport. Possibly as much real benefit might be derived from that as from some of the other subjects which are taught.

NOTES

BY 'RAPIER'

I DO not in the least want to disparage the Arab steed, belief in whom was an article of faith in childhood. Still, facts are facts, and I must give this letter, which comes to me from Calcutta: 'Dear Rapier,—In the October number of the BADMINTON MAGAZINE you point out a simple method of testing the racing capabilities of Arabs, even with the allowance of 28 lbs. which they would get under the terms of the Goodwood Cup. Let me through your pages point out that in India, with an allowance of 42 lbs., admirers of the Arab decline to enter the lists against English and Australian horses. As a matter of fact, 1856 was the last year in which an Arab won the Viceroy's Cup. This year the Viceroy's Cup will be worth nominally Rs. 21,000, or say 1,433*l.* The distance for that race is a mile and three-quarters, and the weights for the different classes are:

Class	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years and aged
English	8.11	9.4	9.7	9.7
Australian	7.12	9.2	9.6	9.7
Arabs	4.11	6.0	6.6	6.7

In spite of such tempting offers I do not remember having seen an Arab even entered for the cup. Ask Lord W. Beresford, who has raced in India for twenty years and won five V. C.s, whether he has ever seen an Arab run in any of them.

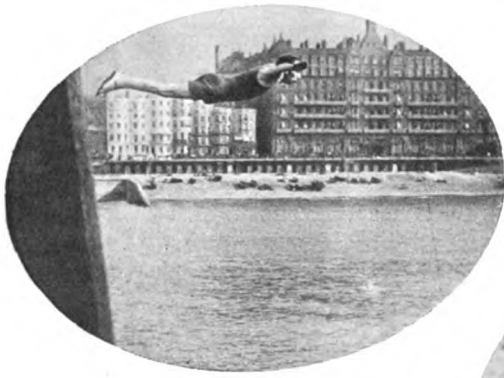
The post has brought me all sorts of letters from all sorts of places this month. Here is one from Gillardstown, Wallegama,

Ceylon: 'I have read in your Magazine a very interesting article on "Shark Fishing," by H. R. Francis. It reminded me of fishing, when a boy, for flat-head in Port Philip Bay, surrounded by sharks. Our boatman was continually warning us against hauling in when a shark was close by, as it might put its nose through the boat in attempting to catch the fish. Now, in the article mentioned above, it is distinctly stated that a shark's snout is too sensitive for such tactics; yet again I read in "Sport in New South Wales," by Lord Hampden, October number, 1898, that the blue pointer will at times charge the boat. I should esteem it a great favour if you will kindly let me know if Mr. H. R. Francis is correct in his statement, and whether it would be fatal for a shark to use its nose to attack.'

Does any reader know anything about sharks? I do not, and can only surmise that either different species of sharks do different things or that individuals of species vary in their habits; for Mr. H. R. Francis is a great authority on fish of all sorts, and Lord Hampden is a sportsman accustomed to weigh his words. Mistakes so easily arise about the habits and peculiarities of animals. There was, for instance, that pretty story in the *Spectator* about the kind squirrels that fed the sheep with apples. The squirrels knew that the sheep liked this fruit, so they climbed trees and bit off the apples that they might fall to the ground for the sheep's refection. It was a delightful idea, and I waited to read about some one else who had seen sheep biting off pieces of turnip, and, with a backward jerk of the head, throwing bits up in the air for the squirrels to catch. That would have been prettier still, but (as was to have been anticipated) the explanation followed. The squirrels, nibbling the apples, let some of them fall down from the branches, but not with the deliberate and amiable intention of providing the sheep with dessert.

This is not quite the time of year for bathing, except for a few hardened eccentrics, but these photographs strike me as so good that I am tempted to give them with the accompanying explanation. Photographs Nos. 1, 2 and 3 represent a very good dive from a height of about twenty-five feet. In No. 1 the diver is seen taking off, having reached a distance of only a foot from the diving board; the position of the body is as nearly as possible horizontal; the legs are already quite straight, and will require no

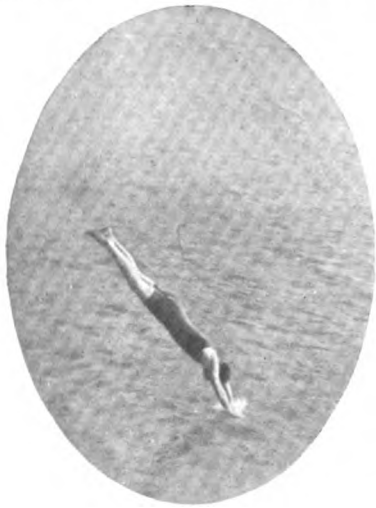
later rectification; the hands are coming rapidly forward; the head is at present rather thrown backwards. No. 2 shows the position of the figure after having passed through rather more than half its flight. The legs retain their original good position, being close together and well in line with



No. 1

the body, which is very little curved; the arms have come forward, the hands well protecting the face, and the head is rather more flexed. The weight of the upper part of the body, combined

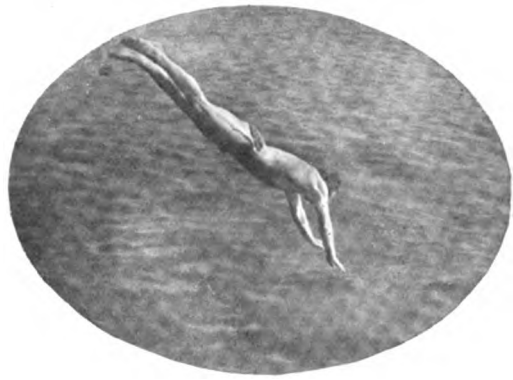
No. 2



No. 3

with the impetus produced by the take-off spring, has brought the body to an angle of about 50° with the water. No. 3 shows an almost perfect entry into the water. The legs continue to be in splendid position and in a nearly absolute line with the rest of the figure; the head is still further flexed, and is thoroughly protected by the hands, which are entering the water with a noticeable absence of splash. The diver in this instance would probably not go more than three or four feet under water. In comparison with the foregoing, No. 4 shows

a diver with several faults. The legs are in very fair position, being quite straight—a point difficult to acquire—but not sufficiently close together; the body also is in good straight position; the head, however, is too much thrown back, and the hands protect the face very inadequately, being not only some distance apart, but not in a line with the rest of the body. The probable effect of this dive will be a smart smack in the face. The height of the dive is about ten feet.



No. 4

Elsewhere in the number it is noted that at this time of year owners of young racehorses are apt to believe that their geese are swans. But there are swans to be found, and it is supposed in Newmarket that Lord Rosebery has some in his string, though he himself is the last man to congratulate himself prematurely, or to form sanguine hopes on any but an extremely well defined basis. Considering that Lord Rosebery keeps comparatively few horses in training, it is remarkable how many good races he has won—consecutive Derbies with Ladas and Sir Visto, a Two Thousand with the former and a Leger with the latter. Such famous events as the Coventry, New, July, Champagne, Prince of Wales' (Goodwood), Champion, and Woodcote Stakes have lately fallen to him, together with a Middle Park Plate and an Eclipse—all races that owners are specially keen to win. Some of the young Ladases are thought by good judges to be among the very best shaped youngsters seen for years. Whether they will prove to be as good as they look remains to be seen, as nobody knows better than their owner, who accepts victory or defeat with an equal mind and the supremest imperturbability. Great hopes were entertained of Corposant last year; and in the case of a very good-looking half-sister to Ladas, who moved in taking fashion, such hopes seemed justified. She was tried, and nothing could have exceeded the coolness with which Lord Rosebery announced the result to his friends. 'Not worth eighteenpence' was the verdict.

A little book called 'Ten Days at Monte Carlo' has lately been published by 'V. B.,' and as I chance to know who 'V. B.' is—a resident during the greater part of the year at Monte Carlo, and a man with no small knowledge of figures and finance—I am surprised to find him recommending a system! The reader is not to imagine that a road to wealth has been discovered. 'V. B.'s' columns of spins do not in the least convince me that his system is sound, though it 'came off'—such as it is—during the ten days that he records. Several things which he says about the game of roulette are doubtless true. The almost invariably accepted idea that the bank has a percentage in its favour equal to one chance in every thirty-seven spins is only accurate when people play on numbers. If you play on even chances, *rouge* or *noir*, *pair* or *impair*, *passe* or *impasse*, it has only half the advantage, one spin in seventy-four, because if zero turns up you can take off half your stake. The percentage in favour of the bank varies, in fact. Thus, if you back one of the dozens, the bank has a four per cent. pull; if you go for two dozens, it has an eight per cent. advantage over you: you lay two to one that twenty-four numbers will beat thirteen.

To come to the system, however. 'V. B.' backs the *avant dernier*—that is to say, the colour (to take colour) that turned up last but one. When zero appears you are to retrieve half your stake and put it in a special fund. You go to win so many units a day—the unit, one louis, two, five or more, depending on your capital. A capital of 600*l.* should enable you to fix the unit at five louis—one of the handsome *plaques* which represent that sum—though it must be admitted 'V. B.' confesses that success is not assured; you may lose all, but he holds it to be most improbable. If you lose ten stakes you increase your unit to two, *i.e.* ten louis; if you are thirty consecutive points to the bad, having lost $50+300=350$, you increase to three units, fifteen louis, and seventeen points to the bad at this rate sees you a loser of a hundred francs over your capital. It will be perceived that there is no infallibility here!

You then get the advantage of all the long runs on either colour and of the intermittences, red, black, red, black; red, red, black, black, is very bad for you. When the number comes up red, red, red; black, black, black, you lose twice to every win. The actual figures given by 'V. B.' are of course no sort of test,

as the tables run so variously. In ten days he played 495 *coups*, won 242, lost 253, winning 29 units, though the bank won eleven *coups* more than the player. Four winning *coups* a day was his object, and it took many hours to gain these 2,900 francs, though the total win was 4,350 francs, the zero fund coming to 1,450.

The plan is tedious, and one weak point in all systems is that people never play them. When one colour has come up seven or eight times you think it *must* change next spin and are tolerably certain to abandon your system; also you get fancies to do other things, and do not stick to your monotonous colours. I know well what would happen to most men. They would often win their four units early in the day, and then—there is not much to be done at Monte Carlo in the evenings—they would amuse themselves with fancy stakes. That is almost inevitable. On other occasions men would get into big figures, grow alarmed, try one of the innumerable little schemes that constantly suggest themselves, and come to grief. In short, 'V. B.'s' system is often apt to be slow, it is never sure, and I fancy it is very unlikely to be much practised.

There is a good deal of money to be won on the Turf if one only has the horses in the first place and runs them judiciously and luckily in the second. I chance to have before me a list of the stakes secured by George Dawson during the thirteen years that he trained, chiefly for the Duke of Portland. As to luck, George Dawson had both very good and very bad. In 1887 and 1888 Ayrshire and Donovan were in the stable; in 1890 Memoir did admirable service; in 1893 there were Raeburn and Mrs. Butterwick; the year following Amiable was very successful, and Grey Leg, one of the very few horses he trained for the Duke of Westminster, added to the total. In consequence of disease in the breeding establishment at Welbeck during the last few years he has had very few animals sent to him that he could by any possibility turn into winners, and the breakdown of the shifty Wantage was a disaster. But here is the list:

Year	Amount won in Stakes	Year	Amount won in Stakes
1886	£10,649	1893	£22,617
1887	15,292	1894	17,477
1888	33,879	1895	11,723
1889	78,432	1896	9,153
1890	29,756	1897	1,267
1891	6,816	1898	1,978
1892	10,088		
			£249,127

I am not sure whether this includes money won for running seconds, but I do not think it does, and if not the total must be a good way over a quarter of a million.

The Duke of Devonshire has registered his colours under National Hunt rules, and it would give a bit of an impetus to the sport if he ran some horses over jumps, as other owners might possibly follow the example. New men are wanted and also new horses. Until one has tried to find a few good 'chasers the difficulty of the quest is not realised. You write to the people you imagine will at once be able to put you on the track of what you are looking for, and find that they also are diligently in search of the same article. The best available way is to take a likely flat race horse and make your jumper; or, if you want something to cross a country, to search for a good hurdle race horse and school him over fences. A prominent owner who has done very much for 'chasing, by the institution of a new meeting, is Mr. H. B. McCalmont, and I was sorry to see some ungenerous criticisms directed at the Newmarket gathering which he started simply for love of the sport. The stands were put up after much discussion, as I chance to know, about where they could best be placed; and he is told that they are just where they ought not to be—as probably somebody would have said wherever they had been erected. The programme did not please some of these critics, and there was too much mud on the road leading to the course; for which regrettable circumstance, however, Mr. McCalmont can scarcely be held primarily responsible. On the whole, in one or two papers he is treated as though he were rather imposing on racegoers and depriving them of their rightful dues. As a matter of fact, Mr. McCalmont started the meeting from motives of the purest good-nature, to provide some sport at Newmarket on days that would otherwise be dull. It is well known that he devotes as much time, energy, thought and labour to the meetings as if his livelihood depended on their success, and with no more sanguine hope than that they would come near to paying their expenses. There was a loss on last year's meetings of 1,500*l.*; the stands and buildings cost 5,000*l.*; and the ground is lost for farming purposes. The sort of comments to which I refer certainly do not encourage gentlemen to spend time and money for the promotion of sport, though happily they are not likely to affect Mr. McCalmont or deter him from the endeavour to popularise his meeting.

THE
BADMINTON MAGAZINE
February 1899

THE ORDEAL OF THE SPEAR

BY COLONEL R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL, F.S.G.S.

IN the deep shade of a mango tope, in the Meerut Kadir, a camp was pitched for the Christmas pig-sticking meet. Among some adjoining trees a few more tents formed the temporary home of some ladies who had come out to the jungle to witness the sport.

Among these were Edna Clay and her mother.

(Had they been English people, I should possibly have referred to them in the reverse order; but with Americans the relative importance of the members of a family is, as a rule, in an inverse ratio to that which obtains in England. The American father and brothers come at the back-end of the list, while the daughter of the house leads at the head.)

The Clays had been wintering in Meerut, where the good climate and the social cheeriness of the large military station contributed to make it an agreeable substitute for the usual Continental watering-places that form the habitat of Americans blizzarded out of their own country.

Having many friends among the 6th Hussars at Meerut, the ladies had been readily persuaded to come and try what camp life was like, and to see a little of this wonderful sport which they found from experience was apt to draw men away from their most solemn engagements. 'Pig-sticking' was a talisman that apparently entitled men to break off an acceptance to dinner, or to

disappear in the middle of a dance, to drive off in their *dak gharri* to some distant meet.

The light rains which usually fell about Christmas-time had not come, consequently in the middle of the day the sun was powerful, and pig-sticking was only carried out in the mornings and afternoons.

To-day, although none of the heat of the midday sun was able to penetrate through the massive foliage of the mango trees and the double fly of the roomy tent beneath them, Miss Edna seemed in a restless mood She could not sit down to write, as her mother did, long screeds to their men-kind at home, nor was she gifted with the power to sketch the sunny view outside their door; her banjo lay neglected in its case, and the latest novels failed to-day to attract her.

'What is it, my dear?' asked the patient mother for the fourth time, looking up from her letter-writing.

'It is this, mamma. I am not going to leave India—I know it.' She was standing at the moment, with her hands clasped behind her, staring out at the sunlit scene; then she turned suddenly to her mother, and with unwonted vehemence exclaimed, 'I've been a fool. I cannot help it. I have let myself fall in love. I never thought about it—I never foresaw it. And now——' she paused, looking out again across the sea of yellow grass.

Her mother had laid aside her pen and taken off her glasses, scarcely surprised, but beaming, anxious to hear more. 'Well, my dear, and why not? I have long seen how he admires you. And as for not leaving India—that would be about the first thing you *would* do. He has told me how he wants to retire from the army so soon as he can get a good excuse—to go and live in his own family mansion, a superb place from what——'

'Mamma,' interrupts poor Edna, almost tearfully—'it is not "the Devil" I am in love with—I wish it were! It is the "Deep C.!"'

To say that she was taken aback would scarcely express the state of mind into which Mrs. Clay was thrown by this avowal. In vain she sought for words to express her protest; this match between her daughter and the Honourable Jack Austin, better known among his friends as 'the Devil,' she had fondly pictured to herself, and secretly and very cautiously had furthered to the best of her ability. For what other reason had she, at her time of life, left the comforts of a well-ordered house in Meerut for the unknown ills of camp life, but that Jack Austin would be of

the party of pig-stickers in whose company she and Edna were to be thrown? Her dream, which had seemed about to culminate in reality, had been shattered at one blow, and she could scarcely for the moment realise the fact.

'And the "Deep C." too—of all people!' This was Major Calvert of the 6th, a dark, handsome, but taciturn man. 'Whatever could Edna see in him?' were points that suggested themselves to her mind.

'But, my dear child,' she urged aloud, considerately putting in the second place that which she considered very much in the first, 'Major Calvert is so—so staid; and Mr. Austin is Lord Revensham's heir, you know.'

'I know, I know all that. And I like "the Devil" better than I liked anyone before. He is, for one thing, a gentleman. Only yesterday he was telling me all about his home and his people. His mother and sisters must be sweet. And I thought then how lovely it would be—but to-day, I see that it is impossible.'

Edna here sank down into a low chair, and after toying for an instant with a paper-knife, resumed her troubled gaze on the distant scene, resting her chin upon her hand.

The mother, in her confusion of mind, remained silent, and the girl presently continued her almost sad confession.

'Yes: I had always looked on Major Calvert as the best of my friends, as he was Mr. Austin's. Indeed,' she added, with a slight laugh, 'I would almost sooner have gone to him for advice in a difficulty than to you, mamma. With him I always felt that I was with an old friend. To-day, coming back from pig-sticking on the elephant with him, I was chaffing him for being so staid, when in reality his mind is full of fun. Then I saw a look cross his eyes that made me ask—without thinking—if he was in any trouble. He told me then the sad, sorrowful little story of his life, which he has never spoken of, even to Mr. Austin. And when he told me that it was my kindness and sympathy had drawn him out, I thought what a prize he would be to anyone as her helpmeet for life. Now I know that I love him as I never cared for any man before. And yet'—with a fluttering sigh of a laugh—'I suppose he would not *look* at me!'

In the meantime, while this conversation was going on between Mrs. Clay and her daughter, in the neighbouring camp Jack Austin and Calvert were, by way of smoking together, in the latter's tent. I never heard who first called them 'the Devil' and

the 'Deep Sea.' Though unlike each other in very many ways, they were an unusually good pair of friends. If you fell out with one—which was not an easy thing to do—you fell out with both. Jack Austin, 'the Devil,' was a cheery, light-hearted, typical British subaltern, ready for any game that was going; while Major Calvert, 'the Deep C.,' though a keen sportsman and full of dry and—what is not always the same thing—kindly humour, was of a quiet disposition, avoiding rather than courting society, and was therefore credited with having some character below the surface. Many a man, indeed, has passed as a clever one before the world simply because he has been wise enough not to let out to what extent he is a fool.

Why the two men should have become such peculiarly good friends it is difficult to see, as theoretically like to the like is the proper apposition; but as a matter of fact this does not work out in practice where like with the unlike very often hit it off completely and satisfactorily. Such had, in fact, happened in this case.

In their tent this morning, after the events of the morning's pig-sticking had been discussed, there had been very little conversation between them; both had sat silently smoking for some time, which, after all, is the way of good friends. Suddenly the Devil broke the silence by exclaiming, 'Look here, Bloggs'—Bloggs was the name by which he usually addressed Major Calvert when not on parade—'I am tired of soldiering. I've hung on a bit hoping to see a little service, but British cavalry seem to be too carefully bottled up nowadays for one to have a chance of it. You have been lucky, and so, perhaps, you can't enter into my feelings. But that's how it is, and I'm going to send in my papers!'

'My dear chap, I quite agree with you about our fine old crusted cavalry, but a day may yet come! And besides, I don't see exactly why this sudden resolution, *now*, with the pig-sticking and polo tournament just coming on. You haven't had to do orderly officer "more than three days a week on an average," as Mr. Glimmer would say—what has put your back up?'

'Nothing has put my back up. It's the other way. I'm going to ask Miss Clay to be my wife.'

'Good heavens!' This came with so sharp a change of tone from Calvert, that Austin almost jumped round in his chair to look at him.

'What is it, old chap? Do you know anything against it?' cried Austin.

'No—at least, not exactly—except that—well, I had intended to do the same thing myself.'

'You!'

'Yes, but it never struck me that *you* were meaning anything that way. I never thought——'

Then both relapsed into silence for a moment, till Austin summed up the situation with the remark—

A VETERAN HAND AT THE GAME

'Well, by gum, we are in a queer hat! What is to be done?'

There was then a silence for so long that Austin, coming back to the actual situation first, exclaimed, 'Bloggs, are you asleep?' Calvert, who was lying back in an armchair, no longer smoking, merely flung back the word with some scorn in his tone, 'A-sleep!'

The Devil, finding that he had an audience, proceeded to give out his views: 'Well, I've been thinking it over, and I don't see a way out of the difficulty. You haven't asked her, you say; have you broken ground at all?'

'Yes, I have in a way broken the ice.'

'Well, then, we're no better off than before. For I've been preparing her by telling her all about my people and prospects, and so on, though I've not asked her right out. But it seems to me she is very young, you know, and you're getting on a bit——'

'Thanks, Jack, but I'm not so old as all that; and even if she took a man of my age, it would be better for her than being shackled on to a flighty young Devil like you.'

The Devil gave up this argument with a sigh, and lay back in his chair with his arms behind his head, staring at the ceiling for further inspiration.

Presently Calvert continued: 'No, my boy, I am perfectly fixed on it. But are you quite sure that *you* mean business? may it not be with you one of those fascinations which you'll allow *do* come to you now and then?'

'No; in those affairs I never speak of my people and prospects,' retorted the Devil with proper pride.

'Quite right. I even found a difficulty in speaking of my prospects, so gave her more of my past, from which she could herself evolve my character.'

'Your past! Oh, by George! then I give in. A man with a past is a hopeless chap to contend against. A girl will jump at him like a trout at a fly; she don't care what his future is likely to be provided he has got a past. Well, it seems to me that we are as we were.'

'We shall have to leave it to her to decide. But, look here, it is tea-time over there; we ought to be going. I don't see any use in cutting each other's throats over it; but it *is* a hat!'

A few minutes later they were wending their way across to the ladies' camp, when Austin, who had been silent for some time, suddenly stopped Calvert and excitedly began, 'Bloggs, I see a way! I was thinking how evenly matched we are at this new game, just as we are said to be at polo and pig-sticking. If we leave the settlement of the thing to her we shall be working against each other all the time, we shall both ask her, which will be very uncomfortable for her, and she'll have to say "No" to one of us, which will be d——d uncomfortable for *him*. One is almost inclined to draw lots about it, but that is so jolly unsatis-

factory for the loser. What do you say to having a match after a pig, you and I, and whoever wins to have first right to ask her? I'm lighter than you, but then they say that a man over thirty is better at pig-sticking and polo than a young un, so that about makes us level. Your little Arab is ——'

Calvert, who had smiled curiously at this new idea of the boy's, while his eye sparkled at the sporting smack of it, now suddenly grasped Jack's hand and laughingly said, 'Right you are, old boy; let's have it that way. The ordeal of the spear shall decide who has the first right to ask her.'

LUTCHMAN, THE SHIKARI, STANDING ON HIS ELEPHANT, HOLLOAS THE PARTY ON

That night at dinner it was known that 'the Devil' and the 'Deep C.' were to ride a match after pig for a wager the following morning. An umpire was detailed to start them and to see fair play. Bets were made among such sportsmen as were that way inclined according to their several fancies, but on every hand it was admitted that there was not much to choose between the two competitors.

At an early hour the beat was under way. The line of beaters was backed up by an imposing show of elephants. Upon these were mounted most of the sportsmen who were keen to see this

match run off. In front of the centre of the line rode Jack Austin on his keen little Waler mare 'Lovelei,' and Major Calvert on his Arab 'Kismet,' and in close attendance rode 'old' Baynton, the collector of the district, a veteran hand at the game, and still hard to beat as a straight-going, deadly man after a pig.

The ladies were not yet out, but an elephant had been left at their camp to bring them on when ready.

The line slowly and quietly beat its way through the long grass of the Kadir plain, working gradually away from the tree jungle and the nullahs that fringe the edge of it. A few small pig were soon afoot, but nothing that Baynton considered rideable.

Suddenly there arises a loud yelling from the beaters on the extreme flank of the line. Old Lutchman, the shikari, knowing of the match, is for once in his life excited. Standing on his elephant he holloas the party on, '*Wuh jata hai! burra dant-wallah!*'

Baynton, clapping spurs to his horse, leads the way in the direction indicated, closely followed by the two riders. In a minute or so he is able to point out to them the form of a fine young boar louping away through the yellow grass, back in the direction of the nullahs.

'Do you all see him?' he cries: 'then, ride!' And away go Jack and Calvert with an even start.

The pig has got a good offing, and is going at a very fair pace, so that they have a long, straight gallop before them to begin with. What are their thoughts at this moment it is hard to say, but possibly the sense of the importance of the occasion is already drowned in the more palpable delight of a racing gallop with the game in view.

That they are both putting on an extra turn of speed is evident from the way they are leaving old Baynton behind, though he is by no means undermounted. Gradually, however, slowly and surely the weight begins to tell, and Jack shows a little ahead of his rival. Elated he presses on, steadily improving his lead.

They are now nearing the boar, and he, laying back his ears and giving a backward glance from the tail of his eye, cracks on his better pace and leads them a burster.

Closer and closer to him draws Jack on Lovelei, with Calvert some three or four lengths behind.

Now Jack gets ready his spear, and letting in knees and spurs, lifts Lovelei with a rush to the pig. At the same time, the boar

seems for a second to shorten his stride, but the next moment, when the horse is at its fastest and he at his most collected pace, he suddenly shoots off at right angles to his line, thereby gaining several lengths before his pursuer can turn. But this manœuvre lets up the second man; Calvert, quickly turning on to the new line, now rides the boar. Gradually and steadily he comes up to him; his spear is ready; the boar pricks his ears and gallops high as he shortens his stride. Calvert knows that a 'jink' is

CALVERT ROLLS THE BOAR HEAD OVER HEELS WITH A CRASHING STROKE

coming, collects his horse, and is ready for it when the pig suddenly turns across his front. Round he comes on the instant in the same direction, and Jack, who is close behind, similarly turns to the left; but before they have gone two strides the pig twists abruptly round again and leaves them both several lengths to the bad as once more he heads for the nullahs.

Again it is a neck and neck race between the two riders, Calvert having a little the best of the start. Indeed, it is a ding-dong race between all three, for the boar has his head set for the

tree jungle which is now not far distant, and he knows that there lies his only chance of escape.

As they near the jungle, the elephant bearing Miss Clay comes out from among the trees, and she thus has an excellent view of the race, though little she knows how much its issue may affect her own future. Calvert is closing on the pig, and another stride or two should land him within spearing distance, when suddenly —whether in a buffalo-wallow or over a hard tussock—'Kismet' pecks heavily, almost on to his head; but though he recovers himself in a trice, the momentary check lets up Jack on 'Lovelei.' Nor is he slow to take his chance; cramming his horse to the front with one extra spurt, he comes on the pig with a rush, and leaning low he drives his spear-point into the burly flank. It is not a good spear, but it counts as 'first.'

At this moment for the first time he sees that Miss Clay, now close above them, is spectator of the game. The magnitude of what he had, in winning first spear, won, now dawns upon him, and as he tosses high his spear, his lungs give vent to an ear-piercing 'who-hoop' of exultation.

Calvert, probably too engrossed in the matter in hand to realise his loss, dashes in, and with a crashing stroke rolls the boar head over heels. But the trees are near; the pig is up again and quickly in among them. Here he gains a little on the men until an open glade is reached, where, finding that they press him still, he turns, and beginning with a shambling trot, breaks into a gallop, and with ears pricked and fire in his eye comes in at the charge. It is met with all the shock of a firmly held spear and a fast-moving horse, and he reels back repulsed but not daunted; a second time he hurls himself against a foe, and a second time the deadly spear crashes into him. He can do no more. Disabled, he sinks on his haunches, his jaws, champing in anger, drop foam and blood. As his enemies once more approach he turns to face them, his little eyes gleaming red with rage, but he cannot rise, and a merciful spear through the heart drops the gallant beast dead.

While Jack is loosing 'Lovelei's' girths, he feels a kindly pat on the shoulder as Calvert says to him, 'Well done, old boy; go in and try your luck. It was a good run, wasn't it?'

. . . . . .

As they led their tired horses slowly back towards the open a native came hurriedly towards them from some neighbouring huts. With a scared face he told his story.

In a few minutes they were standing beside the body as it lay upon a common native charpoy. She looked almost as if she were resting after a bout of tennis. Her white frock and gay silk blouse were fresh and scarcely dishevelled; but there was an awkward uprightness about the small brown shoes; her form

SHE LOOKED ALMOST AS IF SHE WERE RESTING AFTER A BOUT OF TENNIS

seemed flattened down into the cot, and the unnatural sternness about the waxen face, with its half-closed eyes and parted lips, showed that Edna Clay was dead.

Her elephant, frightened at the final rush and turmoil of the race, had turned and fled among the trees, to the instant destruction of the howdah and its occupant.

EXPERIENCES OF A FRENCH SHOOTING ESTATE

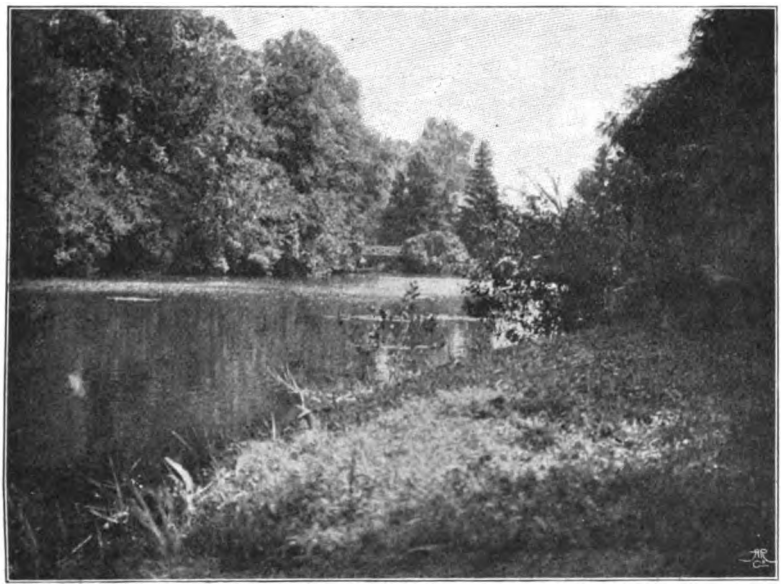
BY J. GORDON

ALTHOUGH the remotest parts of Asia and Africa have been explored by Englishmen in search of sport, probably the number of those who have been content to cross the Channel with the same object is not large. Some, perhaps, have not the opportunity of enjoying the bounteous hospitality of French hosts, and few it may be have the inclination to risk the loss of an English season for the doubtful chance of amusement in a country whose reputation for love of sport is not very high. But those who desire a change and have not the opportunity of going further afield, as well as others who may be compelled by circumstances to spend the autumn in France, will do well to remember that much enjoyment may be derived from the sport in that country, even if it is not equal to our own, and also that they may pick up a few ideas as to the arrangement of a shooting which might even with advantage be introduced on some estates in England. Above all, wherever they go, they will be sure of a most hospitable welcome from their French hosts; for the universal hatred of the English, which is so manifest in the newspapers, is not allowed to intrude into private life.

Though the experiences related below are confined to one estate, yet that estate is, I am given to understand, typical of most of those to be found in the centre of France. In some of the very largest the proprietors are more imbued with English ideas, importing their dogs, guns, cartridges, and even occasionally keepers from England, and for this reason they offer fewer points of comparison than those of the majority of Frenchmen. But at the place in question English notions are unheard of, and the whole shooting is conducted in an entirely French style.

In the first place the game laws of France are different in some respects from those of England. Within the walls of his park the proprietor is supreme. He, and any of his friends, can

kill in any way they choose, and at any time they please, all the game they can find. They can shoot partridges in July or pheasants in August; nor is it necessary for them to take out a licence. Over the rest of the estate, however, he is in the same position as an English proprietor, requiring both to take out a licence and to confine his shooting to the limits of time fixed by law, which, though they seem to vary from year to year, generally begin for partridges and pheasants on the first Sundays in September and October respectively. But besides the large estates a certain amount of land is always reserved by the



SCENE IN A FRENCH PARK

commune, which corresponds roughly to our town council. Over this land all members of the parish who take out a licence have the right to shoot indiscriminately, though this must in some cases lead to great confusion. A game licence also is not to be had with the ease with which it is procured in England. The applicant has to produce witnesses to his character, and is liable to lose his right to one if convicted of certain offences.

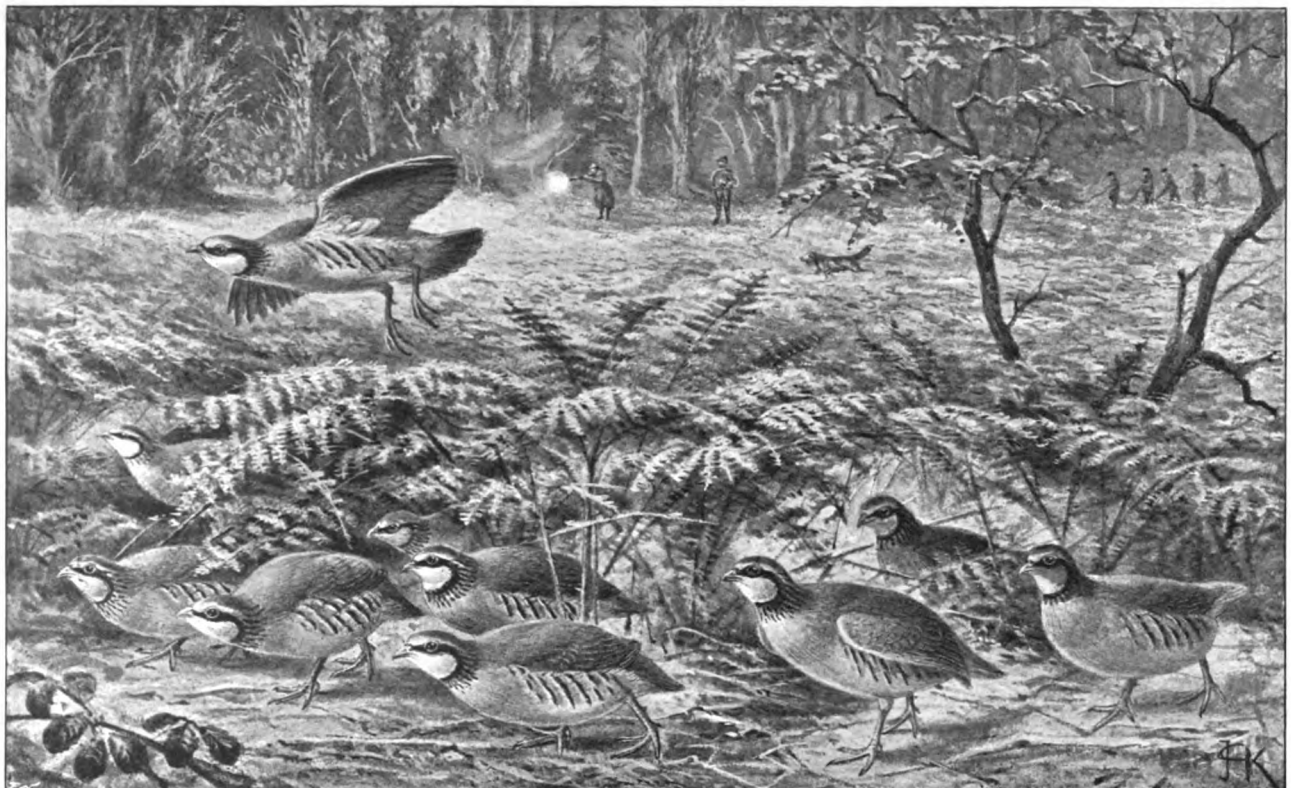
Partridge-shooting, then, begins on the first Sunday in September; for, though it seems strange in England, Sunday, being the day of amusement, is naturally celebrated by the opening of *la chasse* in the country, as well as by the most

important race-meetings in other places. The first day is attended by as much excitement as the corresponding day in England. The *garde*, or keeper, appears in his uniform, which is a sort of mixture of that of a German bandsman and a policeman; the beaters stand about in similarly picturesque garbs, Monsieur and his friends come out arrayed in bandoliers, and with guns slung over their shoulders, looking very martial; even Madame sallies forth on this occasion, dressed in a bicycling skirt and a very serviceable pair of shooting boots, and carrying a tiny 28-bore by Houlier and Blanchard, of Paris, a beautiful toy, shooting very straight, and a model of Parisian work. But in spite of all this excitement—the animated appearance of the shooters, the cries of the keeper to the dogs, which would astonish his brother in England, even the occasional notes on a French horn from some specially excited beater—the air of seriousness which pervades an English shooting party is altogether absent. The Frenchman goes to *la chasse* because of its novelty, because it is gay, and because it is the right thing to do; but it is improbable that he would exhibit the same enthusiasm if he had to undergo any hardships or difficulties to enjoy it. The idea of going out for the whole day is almost unheard of, chiefly owing to the arrangement of meals, which prevents any prolonged activity in the morning, and practically postpones the start of all serious amusement to the afternoon. Thus *la chasse* never begins before two or three o'clock, and in October cannot continue very long after five.

A word may be said about the French arms. Though the gun is always slung over the shoulder by a strap, as if it was a magazine rifle to be carried for a long march, it is almost invariably only of 16-bore, occasionally 20, almost never 12. Though the hammerless gun is a comparative innovation in France, a device is common by which the nipple is dispensed with as part of the gun, but is added to the brasswork of each cartridge by a spoke a quarter of an inch long, rising up through a small hole left for that purpose at the base of the barrels.[1] The danger of anything going wrong with the nipple is thus obviated, and the working of the gun is simplified, but at the sacrifice of rebounding locks. When an extra fine gun is wanted it is imported from England. As to cartridges, black powder seems to be in almost universal use, and English smokeless powder excites great amazement. The size of shot varies as in England.

As to the dogs there is not much to be said. The kennel of the

[1] The old pin fire apparently. Ed.



THE FRENCH PARTRIDGE SHOWS A DISPOSITION TO RUN IN A MOST ANNOYING MANNER

estate I am describing, itself a model of what a small kennel should be, did not contain anything of very great worth. A very small, smooth-coated retriever of uncertain temper, two small and rather fat liver-and-white spaniels, a pointer, also diminutive and without much nose, and a mongrel, half spaniel, who was the best dog of them all. This neglect to provide proper dogs is due to the very low estimation in which they are held for the finding of game. They are used solely for retrieving wounded and dead birds, and if by any chance one makes a point, a very rare occurrence, the excitement is intense. Nor do they fulfil the office required of them with much merit. They seem to be under poor discipline and require a good deal of eloquent persuasion and entreaty from the keeper before obeying his commands; but if they do succeed in recovering a dead bird when lost, the extravagant praise bestowed excites wonder in the Englishman. What should we say if we heard an English keeper addressing his spaniel as *mignon* or *cocotte*? But all these interruptions serve to enliven the day's proceedings. From this distrust of their powers of making a point, seldom more than one dog is taken, even for partridge-shooting.

Arrived at the destination where *la chasse aux perdrix* is to start, the keeper, who is supreme master, sets his beaters and guns in order. Madame is stationed in a road some three-quarters of a mile in advance, where she will probably get the best opportunities. But owing to the ridiculously small weapon with which she is provided, she can hardly hope to do more than to wound. This she does to some purpose, and the number of broken-legged and maimed partridges which escape beyond the road is not inconsiderable. But though occasionally one gun may be placed well in advance in order to avoid the fatigue of walking up the game, the idea of driving partridges in any organised way is almost unknown. This is a great pity, for many reasons. In the first place, as Englishmen have cause to know, the French partridge does not at any time rise well to the guns, but shows a disposition to run in a most annoying manner, finally rising when quite out of range, a disposition which increases as his timidity grows towards the end of September. If driven by a carefully arranged line of beaters, partridges would eventually be forced to meet the guns. Again, the comparative absence of covert renders the task of walking up the birds extremely difficult. By the beginning of September not only is the harvest finished, but the stooks, where the partridges love to lie, are carried. The cultivation of potatoes in France is insignificant compared to that in England,

and even turnips are not grown to any great extent. Hedges seem to be unknown; so it will appear that the comforts of the partridge are not much regarded. But they take with great delight to the shelter afforded in the heat of the day by the buckwheat, which is cultivated in large quantities, and is almost always sure to contain a covey or two. In the small oak copses also, which are scattered over the country, they make their beds in the luxuriant heather which carpets the alleys. But these are about the only coverts provided. The difficulty of walking up birds, naturally excessively timid, in an interminable expanse of fallow and very short stubble is obvious.

With a theatrical cry of '*En avant, messieurs!*' the keeper starts the long line of beaters and guns. A long field of stubble by the side of the wood is the beginning of the first essay. Before long the beaters will have an opportunity of exhibiting a trait common to the character of beaters all the world over. A stray rabbit lying on the outskirts of the wood loses its head and rushes before the line. Immediately, amid cries of '*Lapin, à vous, monsieur, à droit—à gauche!*' forgetful of their orders to advance quietly, the beaters allow their vindictive hatred of the rabbit to get the better of them. Even the shooters grow excited at the various cries, and guns are discharged with rather dangerous recklessness; for the French sportsman's great idea is to increase his own personal bag, and he never thinks a cartridge wasted when discharged with the most remote and improbable chance of success. He is a most jealous shot, and thinks himself entitled to shoot birds that are right under his neighbour's nose. This is probably the reason why, when a small covey rises a couple of hundred yards away from the stubble by the side of the wood, reports are heard from all parts of the line. If one of them *had* been successful, what triumphs there would have been for the successful shot, how the others would have claimed a share in the slaughter! The average French gunner has no compunction about wounding a bird, and only regrets that it cannot go to swell his bag; indeed, he may sometimes be heard to boast that, though his friend killed more than he, yet he did not wound so many.

After the first stubble has been drawn, the line comes to a plot of buckwheat. On arriving at the further edge, a large covey of perhaps seventeen or eighteen birds rises suddenly in the middle. All along the line the guns are heard, and a fair number fall. But just when one is expecting to hear the second barrels, a silence ensues; for the Frenchman, however straight a

shot he may be, has many reasons for not letting off his second barrel. In the first place, owing to the constant use of black powder already mentioned, directly the first barrel is discharged a cloud of smoke envelopes him and he can see nothing. Secondly, the young Frenchman is taught that, when he shoots, even with a fowling-piece, he should tightly close the left eye; thus, after the first shot, he has not time to single out another bird, and at best can only shoot into the brown. Thirdly, he is frequently so excitable that he can think of nothing but the success of his first shot, and forgets to use his other barrel until he has seen his first bird motionless on the ground. This accounts

TYPICAL FRENCH CHÂTEAU

for the smallness of the bag in comparison with the quantity of birds and the precision of aim.

After another stubble has been drawn, Madame is again picked up, and a small wood is beaten, which is sure to produce some partridges and hares, and later on a few wild pheasants. The hares run fairly large, averaging about eight and a half pounds, but the rabbits are unaccountably small. Then follow refreshments, so-called beer, which bears not the slightest resemblance to the English beverage, and the inevitable cigarettes (fancy a beater with a cigarette!), after which the sport is resumed with much the same programme. At half-past

six at latest, or much sooner if towards the end of September, *la chasse* ends, and the bag is counted, each sportsman pointing out with triumph his share, and disputing with energy over the doubtful victims. Some eighteen brace of partridges, if soon after the 1st, a few rabbits and hares, and perhaps a woodpigeon or two if *la chasse* continues late into the evening, is the reward of some four or five guns for at most four hours' walking. And leaving the wounded to fare as best they can, we return home after a most enjoyable afternoon (interfered with only by the thought of the creatures that have been hit and not gathered) spent in the midst of lovely country and imperturbably gay companions, whose liveliness even fatigue cannot conquer.

Pheasant-shooting, as has been said, begins on the first Sunday in October, and by that time the birds are usually far enough advanced for the sport to open. The same system of rearing is pursued as in England. After reckoning up the number of birds which are there naturally, and those which have been left over from the year before, a large number of eggs and young pheasants are added. The cost of rearing pheasants is much the same as in this country. There are large pheasant-farmers in France as well as here who guarantee success for eighty per cent. of the eggs, and are ready to make up any deficit to that extent by young birds. A few years ago a large number of English-bred pheasants were sent over, and soon after their arrival developed an alarming malady which spread not only to the native pheasants, but even to the farm poultry. The malady seems to have been an aggravated form of croup, and inflicted great mortality. I cannot discover who was the English farmer who was responsible for these birds, nor whether it was in any way his fault, but it has created a great prejudice against birds from this country which it will be difficult to eradicate. The pheasants are all reared within the walls of the park, and the keepers show a maternal care in tending their charge. All through the spring and summer one of them spends the whole night in the woods, and as the season draws near, all birds, whether cock or hen, that show a disposition to leave their own feeding grounds for those of their neighbours, are at once shot. Besides the difficulties against which an English keeper has to contend, such as foxes, weasels, and hedgehogs, in France there are badgers and occasionally polecats, who are fatal to the pheasants. The neighbours also vie with one another in offering the birds attractive quarters.

During the time of the Second Empire a large number of the

French parks were laid out very carefully with perfect arrangements for facilitating a pheasant-shoot. The whole property is divided up into a number of small *carrés* or squares, about 200 yards by 100, composed of all kinds of fine trees, chiefly poplars and a few firs, with very luxuriant undergrowth. Between these *carrés* there are glades about six yards wide, which make perfect positions for the guns. Every here and there large plantations of maize, rising to eight or nine feet in height, offer excellent cover for pheasants and rabbits, and have also the advantage of furnishing very good cattle food in the winter, not being too rich.

A HAUNT OF THE WILD-DUCK

But now that the sportsmen who flourished under the Third Napoleon are gone, these *carrés* have been allowed to become too dense. The trees, as they have increased in size, have not been properly thinned out, and the undergrowth has become far too thick and high, in fact, almost impenetrable even for a beater, far more for one with a gun at full cock, wishing to fire at a moment's notice at any pheasant that will not face the guns in advance. An inordinate number of beaters is required, far greater than is justified by the extent of the estate, and the guns are posted on all sides, while only in the more open coverts does anyone wishing for a shot walk with the line. But the sport is

excellent in a small way for those who happen to be in a good place. Owing to the number of tall trees, the birds almost invariably come with their high rocketing flight, and on a fine sunny day, such as one often enjoys in France all through October, few things can be more lively than a French pheasant *battue*. The excited faces of the *messieurs*, and occasionally *mesdames*, the picturesque costume of the beaters and keepers, with their cries, which seem to come straight from the opera-house, mingled with the constant report of the guns on all sides, the lovely trees and rich vegetation still as green as in the height of summer, and, above all, the beautiful birds which fly with their graceful motion in all directions, combine to render infinite satisfaction to eye and ear. The French pheasant, probably fostered by the warmer sun, has a still brighter plumage than is usually seen further north, and shines in the sun like burnished copper with all the colours of the rainbow. The bag may not be enormous, for various reasons, but the liveliness and gaiety of the whole business, together with the small amount of hard work entailed, make the day's shooting seem even shorter than it really is.

Rabbit-shooting is a favourite pastime, and there is nothing the Frenchman delights in so much as bowling over a *petit lapin*. The alleys between the *carrés* furnish very sporting chances, and ferreting is carried on in the same way as in England. The only striking feature I noted was the extraordinary brilliant *coups* which were attempted at very long ranges, though impeded by thick trees and even dense undergrowth. Occasionally marvellous shots were brought off, though the number of cartridges expended was large. But the French sportsman is notoriously callous as to the wounded animals which he leaves behind him. On these occasions we were cursed with the attendance of an underkeeper who was a would-be wag, and took a delight in calling our attention to entirely fictitious rabbits behind our backs, while the real article was bolting before our noses. The retention of such a man in his situation, who was besides utterly ignorant of his profession, is typical of a French proprietor, whose sole demand in his servants is gaiety and vivacity of temperament.

Wild-duck are to be found in numbers during the winter. Foxes, as is natural in a country where they serve no useful purpose, are ruthlessly slaughtered for the harm they do to the pheasants. Weasels and other vermin, including hedgehogs, which abound, are killed for the same reason. Badgers are frequently to be met with, and are a great nuisance. Snakes do great

damage to the eggs, but are harmless otherwise. Boars occasionally traverse the country in their rambles, though not indigenous. All sorts of wild-birds, such as jays, woodpeckers, magpies, and screech-owls, are to be found in numbers, and their plumage seems to be more brilliant than in colder climates. A word may be said about the fishing, to which the Frenchman is devoted when years have toned down his volatile nature, so that as many patient fishermen may be seen by the banks of a stream, waiting by the side of a line for the fish that never come, as on the reaches of the upper Thames. Spotted trout as well as coarse fish abound, running sometimes very heavy.

The idea has grown up that the Frenchman, when he goes to *la chasse*, goes out dressed in a green coat and jack-boots, with a horn encircling his body, and shoots anything he sees, from a sheep to a sparrow, men and dogs sometimes not excluded. Though this view is, of course, utterly erroneous, a French shoot does not compare altogether favourably with the corresponding English function. There is always the lamentable absence of the smoking-room or gun-room, where the day's proceedings can be discussed over a pipe and a whisky-and-soda. There is also a lack of much sporting feeling; for the Frenchman shoots because it is the right thing to do more than for any other reason, and does not exhibit that permanent and serious interest in his pleasures which is so characteristic of the English sportsman. His disregard for the sufferings which he inflicts on wounded animals is very noticeable. But in spite of this he is thoroughly determined to enjoy himself, and his keen sense of the duties of hospitality obliges him to do everything he can to ensure the enjoyment of his guests. In fact, anyone who spends a month or two on a French estate is sure to carry away with him a number of recollections of delightful friendships and enjoyable *journées de chasse* which he will never lose.

An excellent opportunity offers itself to any enterprising person of introducing a better breed of sporting dogs, setters or pointers, of which there is a great lack.

ON THE EDGE OF THE BANK

BY HAROLD BINDLOSS

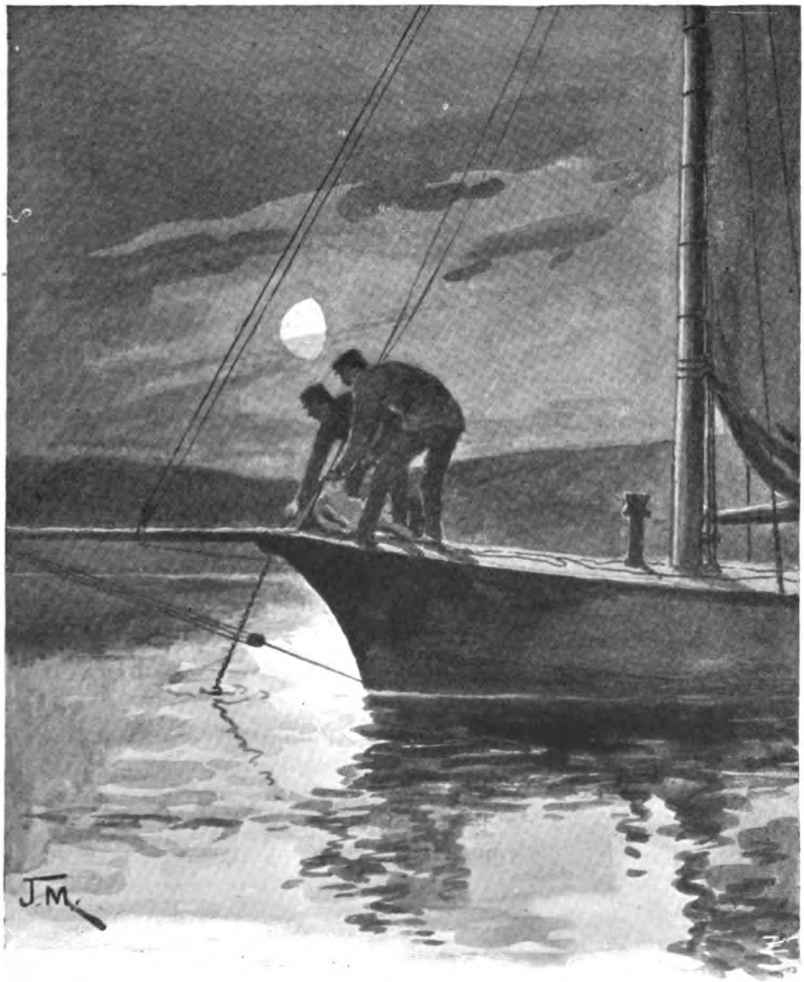
ONE still autumn evening I lounged on a lair of dry sea-grass above the weedy ledges of Hilbre Island, which lies in the mouth of the Cheshire Dee. Away to the westward, and across the estuary, a line of dim black hills rose out of wisps of haze, while here and there a light glimmered faintly along the Cheshire shore, and mile after mile of sloppy sand stretched south until it was lost in the gathering mist.

A little flickering draught of air came out of the south and east, bringing with it the shrill whistle of scurrying dotterel and the hollow calling of curlew which fed along the banks. A gurgling rush of tideway stirred the weed beneath my feet, and from somewhere far out in the dimness, apparently rather from sky than sea, there came a monotonous vibration, the growl of the groundswell lapping along leagues of seaward banks. Presently a half-moon rose red and coppery over the Cheshire land, and I watched the vapours slide across it until a shout came through the haze. Then a flash of green and gold phosphorescence broke the streak of tide, and a little sawn-off dinghy grounded close beneath.

'You have been a precious time hunting those few provisions up,' commenced the bare-legged man who stepped ashore, but broke off into a howl of wrath as the sharp edge of a barnacle scored his incautious foot, and piling the packages in the dinghy I trod on something that yielded when I stepped in over the bows.

'Of course you must land right on top of the cormorant—take care or you'll break the gun as well,' said my companion as he shoved the dinghy off. 'I shot him struggling with an eel that plaited itself about his head and would not be swallowed down;'

and soon we slid into the greyness, the water flaming with green sea-fire at every dip of the oars. By-and-bye we rounded-to alongside a stumpy five-ton cutter straining at her cable in the line of tide, and her dew-soaked mainsail distilled a shower upon



THEN TWO SHADOWY FIGURES HAULED THE GRINDING CABLE IN

my head as it slatted in a puff of sultry air when I clawed aft and took the helm. Then two shadowy figures leaning forward above the bitts hauled the noisy cable in, and a rush of dusky water broke into flashes against the bows as I sheered her when the

rigid chain ground across the stem, until, as a breathless gasp informed me, it was straight up and down, I seized the dinghy's painter and hauled her alongside.

Ellison, the owner, though a good all-round hand, was more of a naturalist than a yachtsman, and had a weakness for filling the little vessel with miscellaneous feathered trophies besides those which were good to eat. These he occasionally insisted upon dissecting, in spite of the protests of the rest, and I considered it quite probable he would perform curious operations upon that cormorant for the purpose of finding out what its last meal had been. A plump mallard or a gorgeously painted shell-drake may be an ornament to a six-foot cabin, but a cormorant, with its subtle fish-like smell and the things that grow upon it, would be very much the reverse; so I felt a thrill of contentment when I launched the fowl over the side.

Then the cable came in with a rattle, while one man sat down violently on the bitts. The loosely stopped jib was broken out, and swinging the tiller I turned 'Maranee's' head down tide. There was scarcely air enough astir to hold the big topsail asleep, and with no gurgle beneath either bows or run we drifted on into the night, the monotone of the surf growing louder as buoy after buoy loomed out ghost-like through the haze.

From the Point of Air in Flintshire to the Nelson buoy which swings in the Ribble tides, Liverpool Bay may best be described as a piled-up mass of sand through which the tortuous channels wind—a deadly place for a stranger in howling winter nights, and not over-safe for the yachtsman who is not well up in its tides. These streams play curious tricks at times, and one instance which happened a few weeks ago may be mentioned as remarkable. The skipper of a steam lighter delivered me at the Royal Mersey Yacht Club slip, which lies about a mile up river from Liverpool, a punt he had found drifting keel uppermost to sea five minutes or so before. The legend 'Kelpie, R.M.Y.C.,' was painted across its stern, and I wondered as I read it, because, although that cutter's mooring buoy floated off the end of the slip, the vessel was then at Beaumaris in the Menai Strait, some fifty miles away. I wondered still more when a message came later from the owner in Anglesey. 'I lost my punt three days ago off Beaumaris pier; have you heard anything of her from out-station coastguards?' and for a time both parties fancied the other was testing his credulity. An ebb tide should have taken that dinghy to Ireland, or ground her upon the spouting reefs between Puffin and Holyhead. The flood should have swept her up the Dee, or the north-

ward stream set her away for Morecambe Bay, and yet she had travelled fifty miles unguided straight home to her moorings again. This is a digression, but merits passing mention, and several well-known yachtsmen can vouch for its accuracy.

Thus it happened that when the faint tolling of a bell came quivering out of the night, for a token that the last of the ebb was setting us down on the Fairway beacon which guards the mouth of the Hilbre Swash, and Ellison suggested we should creep along the edge of West Hoyle bank, I made no ready assent. For ten miles that island strip of hammered sand runs parallel to the coast of Wales, and though, as the sportsman pointed out, I knew its mud-ribbed gullies where the curlew and grey gull feed, I liked them none the better for that. The flood would soon be sluicing through every fretted tideway, the wind was light and fickle, and only a faint glimmer of moonlight shone down from the black vault above. Still, as Ellison insisted, we had two good anchors on board, and groping westward with the lead we crept in towards the sand, a dim sheen of water about us fading into greyness of haze. Presently, when the plummet gave less than two fathoms, the anchor rattled down, and after I had seen the jib loosely stopped round the bowsprit, and run a globular light chock to the masthead, Ellison leapt into the dinghy with his ten-bore gun.

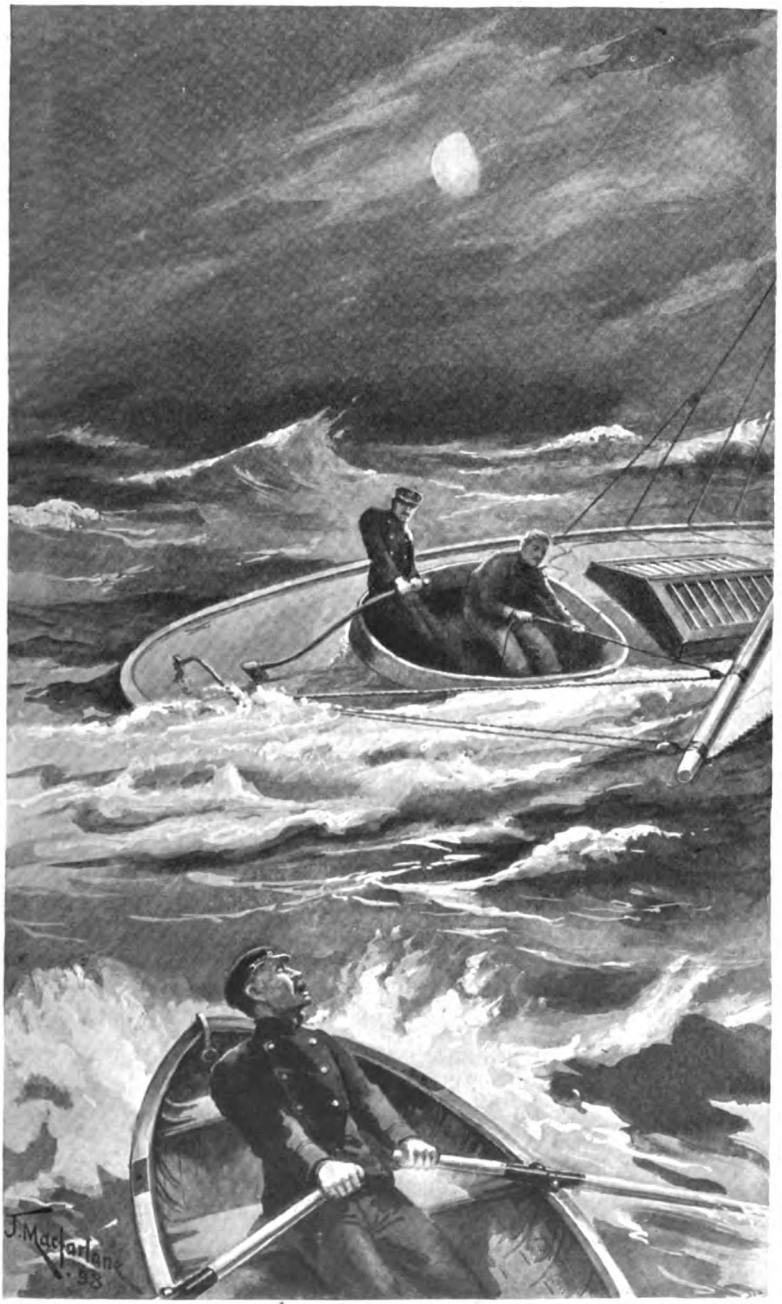
Shivering in the dampness I crept into the brightly lighted cabin, and the splash of oars grew fainter, while a calling of innumerable wildfowl rang weirdly through the ceaseless moan of the surf. Twice the boom of the big gun went echoing out to sea, and was followed by the 'honk-honk' of the grey gulls and the shrill curlew's scream, while with a beat of shadowy wings great flocks of birds went by. Then silence settled down again, and while a companion kept watch in the cockpit I stretched myself on the lockers, somewhat uneasy in mind. In spite of the high glass, there had been thunder growling far off all day, and the edge of West Hoyle was not the place I cared to bring up in at midnight with one very raw amateur as companion. At last my eyelids grew heavy, and I had almost fallen asleep when I was roused by a sudden swaying down of the lockers and a startled cry. Crawling out on deck I found the mainsail and topsail slatting wildly overhead, while a rush of wind lashed my face with spray, and the long-backed swell burst in spiteful ripples against our weather bow.

'Came on without any warning half a minute ago,' gasped the bewildered object who was trying to dodge the boom, and two

jarring crashes came up from somewhere to lee. Another followed closely, and we knew our companion was calling out for aid, probably finding it beyond his strength to pull the punt head to wind. Then 'Maranee' listed sharply, down to her covering-board, and amid a mad rattle of loosened canvas came up in the wind again, while, running forward we laid hands upon the cable and hauled in desperately. At times the chain was across the stem, held there as though in a vice, then it led broad off on the weather bow and we got a fathom in. There was no time to waste over the topsail while our comrade was fighting, perhaps vainly, to pull out from the edge of the bank, so when, with a gasp of thankfulness, we broke the anchor out, I seized the jib halliard and a balloon-like mass of sailcloth blew thundering to lee. We straightened it up with the purchase, and leaving the other to struggle with the cable, for the anchor seemed foul of the forefoot, while the jib lashed his head and shoulders, I scrambled madly aft, and with one foot against the headledge managed to haul its sheet.

Then, as I jammed the helm a-weather, the little vessel gathered way, swaying over and over until a white-streaked foaming rush lapped towards the coamings, and the masthead creaked with the strain. Next a half-drowned object staggering from the bows proceeded to loose topsail halliard, sheet, and tack at once. Immediately a mixed-up mass of gear threshed about masthead and gaff, the cutter righted a little, and while I howled misunderstood instructions to the bewildered man who clawed at the flying ropes, a red flash came out of the darkness some distance ahead. The foam was now boiling not underneath but high above the counter as the little vessel drove right down upon the bank, and I strained my eyes to catch the first glimpse of our dinghy among the confused whiteness of torn-up swell and spray. We must have travelled faster than I had calculated on, or the flash of the gun was misleading, for presently very close to lee a howl came up wind, and I saw the loom of the plunging punt hove up on the side of a swell, while our light, which still hung from the masthead, swung wildly out to leeward with every vicious lurch.

It was a despairing howl, for with the wind over the quarter we flew past the punt like a train, and shouting to my companion to haul in the mainsheet, if he could, I jammed the tiller up—I had learned in other waters, on the edge of the northern ice, that if you wear a vessel sharply and let her come head to wind again she will recross the wake she ploughed a minute or so before—though I held my breath, expecting that something would surely



WITH THE WIND OVER THE QUARTER, WE FLEW PAST THE PUNT LIKE A TRAIN

go. It did, for as the mainboom swung over, ripping the fall of its sheet through my companion's fingers, with some of his flesh as well, there was a crash aloft by the masthead, and ragged fragments of topsail streamed out from the broken yard. A mad lurch to leeward followed, the runner burst with a bang, and while I thrust upon the tiller—it was hard to leeward now—the boom jerked itself out of the water and the canvas began to shake. Then someone shouted hoarsely, close on our weather side, and as I struggled to haul the jib aback a black and shapeless object drove down upon our beam. There was no time to waste over scientific rounding-to, so the dinghy smote our quarters head on, like a battering-ram, and with a breathless yell of triumph a dripping figure gripping a gun leapt in over the rail. Then as the two men hauled in the mainsheet I eased the tiller down.

'I was almost blown ashore on the bank, in spite of the best that I could do. Never saw anything half so sudden in my life,' gasped the panting sportsman. 'You haven't room to heave to for reefing—thresh her out for open sea.'

His words required no comment. We were somewhere halfway along the weather edge of a ten-mile bank, across which and through its gullies the tide ran like a sluice. No anchors would save her if the sea got up, as it was fast beginning to do, and with the jib wet to its head, and the water that burst over the weather bow flying solidly continuous into the mainsail foot, we held her at it full and by. In the hardest of the puffs she seemed to sail on her skylights side, while weltering foam poured over the counter and lapped in splashing cataracts across the coamings edge; for 'Maranee,' like other small craft of the kind, had a trick of burying herself by the stern when driven over hard. And all the time there was a flicker of lightning in the north and tattered rags of sailcloth slashed about the masthead, which bent ominously, its clatter mingling with the fitful growl of thunder we heard every now and then. At last Ellison, jamming himself between the rail and the skylights, while his water-soaked companion was braced against the boom, succeeded in getting the wreck on deck, and we clung to the brine-swept coamings, wondering if we could claw her off the bank.

Half-buried and over-canvassed, the little ship held on, the plunges growing wilder as the sea got up, until each time she drove into the heart of a comber, from bowsprit end to mast foot all was hidden in the sea. Still, reefing was out of the question, for before we could have hauled the earing down she would have driven ashore to lee. Meanwhile we could hear for encourage-

ment the boom of the surf on the bank, for what had been a long smooth swell was already a mass of parallel ridges breaking confusedly; and when Ellison, clinging to the shrouds, blinded by battering spray, managed to make a few casts of the lead we found from nine to twelve feet beneath us, and knew we were barely holding our own. It was a very grim race to weather the end of the sand before the fast-freshening wind and run of sea cast us bodily ashore. If masthead and canvas stood the strain, 'Maranee' might do it yet; but no one cared to speculate what would happen if she failed.

Without the staysail, which we dare not set, the boat was very hard on her helm; so when my shoulders were aching I slipped the tiller into Ellison's hands, and after a vain attempt to work the pump, which only resulted in badly battered ribs, I crouched under the weather coamings and tried to hope for the best. Then there was a vicious jerk on the taffrail where the painter had been made fast, and staring aft through the whiteness I saw that the dinghy had been swamped at last. Now she seemed to be rolling over and over like an exaggerated phantom minnow, occasionally varying the programme by swooping down out of sight; and when Ellison said, 'For Heaven's sake try to get that thing on board; with it dragging her down to leeward she'll never clear the bank,' we hauled in the painter inch by inch until the wallowing object was abreast of our weather side. There was no use trying to slide it on board to lee, where a smother of broken ridges leapt up to the foot of the boom, and, standing half-erect on the inclined deck, I lifted by the painter while the other wrenched at the forward thaft.

'Ease her!' I yelled, and Ellison put down his helm, with the result that 'Maranee' buried herself deep in the breast of a comber that came roaring down. Half the jib and bowsprit disappeared from view, the sea foamed over the skylights, and for a moment I was both choked and blinded by a cataract of spray. Then there was a shout from the man beside me, 'Look out, I can't hold on,' and the cutter rolled down to leeward, flinging me off my feet. I made a grasp at the runner, missed it, and seizing my companion's shoulder instead, both went backward together head over heels into the cockpit, while from the sudden jerk on the taffrail and the way the cutter seemed to leap forward beneath us we knew the punt had gone.

'Just as well,' shouted Ellison hoarsely; 'one of you might have gone with it, too. See what water there is—that breaking ahead looks like the last of the spits.'

THEN A SMOTHER OF FOAM FELL ON US, THE DECK WAS LOST TO VIEW

A cast of the lead gave something less than ten feet, and staring between the jib and the mast I saw it was black as the pit to leeward, save for the ghostly glare of phosphorescent surf where the edge of the bank should be. Still, with straining eyes I made out what seemed the loom of a hill, and knew we were off the entrance to one of the fairest valleys in Wales. That, however, brought no particular comfort in itself; but it also meant that if we could weather the last jutting horn of the bank, there were miles of open water very close ahead, and weather it she must, for to go about would result in being certainly cast ashore.

'As high as she'll lie,' shouted Ellison, and the spray cut the words into gasps. 'We're heading straight for the end of the spit; it's an even chance she strikes.'

For a few following moments three miserable, brine-lashed yachtsmen held their breath, watching the piled-up mass of whiteness that lay across their path. Then a smother of foam fell on us, the deck was lost to view, and with a crash of splintering glasswork the skylights were broken through. Aft, a foot deep, came the welter, over the coamings, too, until the water was up to our knees upon the cockpit floor; then the bowsprit swung up sharply, bending like whalebone, in spite of its whisker shrouds, as the jib sagged away to lee. But the little vessel had no time to shake herself out of the sea, for with the cotton rope plaited about his wrist Ellison dragged at the tiller line, and she went through the following sea-ridges, scarcely lifting her head. The end of the boom was smashing the tops of the sand-filled seas, dark water beat into the mainsail foot until it quivered like a drum, and the brine washed hissing down the inclined deck, as surf rolls over a half-tide rock. Then, instead of a vertical spouting to leeward, we could dimly make out a roll of foam-flecked sea, and one at least of the party drew a deep breath of relief when the roar of the surf on the hammered spit grew fainter astern.

A cast of the lead gave four fathoms, and jamming the tiller a-lee the helmsman said, 'We have cleared the last of it somehow, and now we'll reef her down.'

It was not the easiest operation hauling down reefs in blackness and spray on a wildly plunging boat, but willing hands made light work, and in spite of the banging, lurching boom, we dragged the earing home. Then as we struggled to knot the swollen points, the rain came hissing down, rattling like shingle on our oilskins and bouncing from the deck, while the helmsman

shouted the cheery assurance that this would kill the wind. At first it seemed he must be mistaken, for 'Maranee' went staggering away to the westward under all that she could carry with two reefs down, while a mutter of distant thunder rolled along the cloudbanks overhead; but at last the angle of deck grew easier, the plunges into the hollows less steep, and when we made out the loom of black hills over Abergele she was almost on even keel.

Then flinging our wet oilskins from us, two of the party crawled away below, and soon the kettle was hissing on the swinging spirit stove. Hot coffee and food were prepared and speedily stowed away, and, disregarding the water that gurgled ankle-deep across the floor, I wrapped a dry blanket round me and climbed into a cot. When I wakened, we lay rolling idly off the Great Ormeshead, the steep-sided, transparent swell running smooth as oil about us, and a towering mass of iron cliff, limestone ridge, and streaks of short sea pasture high above our heads. Westwards the black heights of Penmaenmawr, with the splintered peaks of the Carnedds and Moels behind, loomed out of rolling vapour, and to the eastward the crimson disc of the rising sun hung low down over the heaving sea.

It was, as the tired-out helmsman said when he thankfully surrendered the tiller, a very promising morning, and last night's breeze only a short thunder-blow; but, he added significantly, it very nearly finished the 'Maranee.'

A DRIVING TOUR IN CORSICA

BY GEORGE J. GOSCHEN, JUN.

A DEEP blue sky; a bright sun shining on the clear smooth sea, unruffled by the warm soft breeze which wafted the sweet scent of the cistus off the shore and hardly stirred the white ensign lazily floating at the stern of H.M.S. 'Forte' as she rode at anchor in the bay; the gleaming white peaks of the distant mountains and the lovely town of Ajaccio on the water-side with its white houses, relieved by the green of the palm trees which shade its streets! As this picture met our eyes when we came on the deck of the Marseilles steamer early one morning in January, we could hardly believe that the sufferings we had been enduring for the previous sixteen hours were not a horrible dream, but for certain physical symptoms which still remained with us.

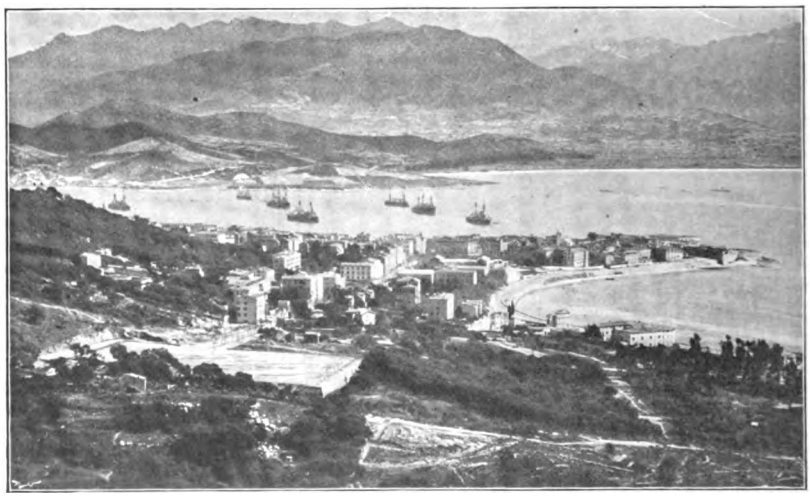
An hour after leaving Marseilles my wife and I had gazed on a very different sight, a lowering sky and a dark grey sea, tossed about by the rising wind, which chilled us to the bone as we sat huddled up on deck, till our last remnant of pride drove us to seek the seclusion which the cabin grants. There we remained, and not even the commotion caused by a fire breaking out in the mail-room roused us into activity.

Surely, then, it speaks volumes for the beauty of Corsica that this dismal night should be forgotten the moment we saw her sunny shores. Most of her visitors, I believe, come under her

spell, but few of them take the trouble to know her inmost charms.

Travelling in the interior of Corsica is undoubtedly very rough, but the traveller is compensated by the beauty and wildness of the scenery and by the hospitality which is always shown to him by the peasants.

To thoroughly enjoy a tour through the island the traveller should choose a light carriage in Ajaccio with a civil intelligent driver, and map out a tour with his assistance. This was the plan we adopted, and it was attended by the greatest success.



AJACCIO AND HARBOUR, WITH FRENCH WAR VESSELS AT ANCHOR

It was a glorious morning, warmed by a sun which made one think it was August and not January on which we started from Ajaccio on our first driving tour.

The carriage was a small, light Victoria, drawn by two ponies of about fourteen hands, decked with foxes' brushes, which hung from their bridles, and with bells round their necks; wonderful little beasts they were, doing their thirty miles a day without tiring, always willing to trot up hill, and never showing symptoms of work. The driver, dressed as they all are in a complete suit of brown velvet corduroy, with a broad felt hat and a bright handkerchief, was a charming man with courtly manners, and had the virtue, not shared in by many of his confrères, of being very kind to his ponies. Our one portmanteau was slung behind, while a luncheon and tea basket, provided with butter, tea, and cocoa—

unobtainable commodities in the interior—and two huge sacks of hay for the ponies shared the spare spaces on the carriage.

With a loud crack of the whip we dashed off at a great pace through the town, which, as the population mostly spend their time in the middle of the streets, threatened to carry destruction into many a home. Soon, however, leaving the town behind us, we were able to breathe more freely in more senses than one, the Corsican system of drainage being somewhat antiquated.

But this reproach cannot be made in respect of the roads, which are perfect and in many places a triumph of engineering.

CORSICAN PEASANTS

They are broad, smooth, and have no dust, a characteristic of the stone of which they are made.

In the heart of the island, in the wildest passes of the mountains, they are the same, at times cut out of the sheer face of the rock, winding round and round with easy gradient until the summit is gained. They have cost a fabulous sum, but are kept in beautiful order; often in the midst of a pine or chestnut forest, fifteen miles or more from human habitation, one comes on a house for the cantonniers in a clearing from which they go out to work on their piece of the road.

On leaving the outskirts of the town we passed along the

plain in which it stands, which is given over to vineyards, cultivated by Italian workmen for a Corsican proprietor. At the early hour at which we started the road was full of life, peasants coming into market astride their mules or sitting on the top of loaded panniers, the ladies adopting the same easy attitude as the men; many of the women striding along under an enormous load on their head with a grace and carriage which would be envied in a London drawing-room, but which I am told can be easily acquired by adopting the same means of carrying your parcels.

Soon we left the more busy life of the plains behind us, though no Corsican is ever really busy beyond watching the activity of others, to ascend into the mountains, and were glad to walk up the hill and stretch our legs, to the immense astonishment of our *cocher*.

After some four hours' driving we reached a small mountain hamlet differing in no single feature from the many others we visited.

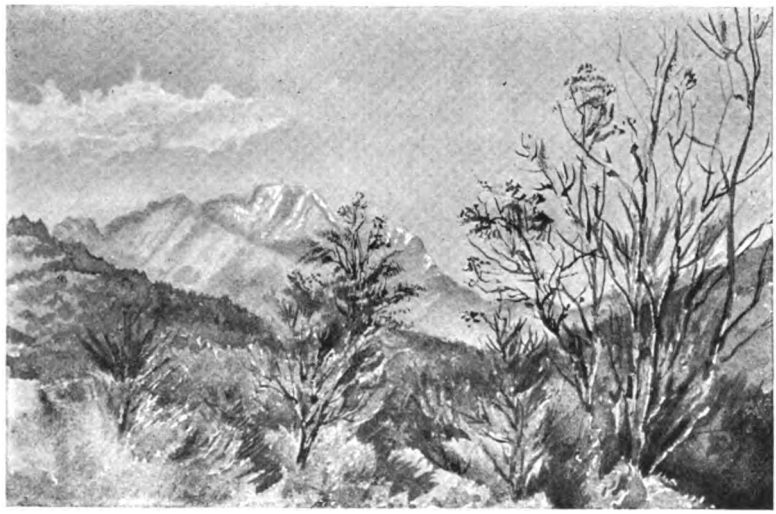
All are perched on the side of a hill, built of a grey stone which makes it hard to pick them out from the landscape until you are quite close. One long street runs through the centre, from which narrow steep paved lanes debouch.

The centre street is always occupied by the male population, waiting alternately for the diligence *de la poste* or the next day. All the houses are exactly alike, the inn being no better, and, as far as we could judge, no worse than any other, but having rather more spare room.

As we drove up to a very rough-looking house in this tiny village of Calcatoggio, it was evident we had arrived on no ordinary day. There were signs of life in the street, the centre of which was occupied by a herd of ill-looking pigs. Two respectable gentlemen in suits of black broadcloth, who seemed as if they occupied the posts respectively of town clerk and churchwarden, were looking at them, now stroking the back of one or another, while the aged hostess of the inn appeared delighted at this unexpected appearance of industry in the other sex. If the pigs resented this undue familiarity and modestly retired, one gentleman drew from the depths of a huge pocket, which made the circuit of his back, a handful of chestnuts, and enticed them back again. Suddenly the two men seized a pig by the legs, causing it to utter piercing squeals; the others made off, but on seeing their companion being seized, charged down the street, and were only beaten back by the valiant efforts of the old

lady and myself, while my wife, armed with a parasol, acted as a reserve.

The pig, meanwhile, was borne off in triumph, and, its four legs being tied together, was deposited on its back on a seat outside the inn window. We thought it was to be carried off to be sold, when suddenly, without a word of warning, one of the men drew out a large knife, and amidst the most awful squealing plunged it into piggy's throat, just as the youngest citizen, *ætat* two, came rushing up, his features expressing great apprehension that he would be too late for the fun.



MONTE D'ORO

Leaving the admiring crowd, we managed to tear the old lady of the inn away from the captivating spectacle and get her to show us the dining-room and bring us some food. The room was small, stuffy, and dusty, and the table-cloth had evidently not yet paid its yearly visit to the laundress. But we were hungry and not over-particular. Our meal was a light one.

No country village possesses a butcher, for the good reason there is no meat to sell—eggs, chestnuts in every form, and blackbirds seem to be the staple food of the country; while on rare occasions one can get a chicken or some part of a pig. At this inn we had an excellent omelette and some tiny pieces of pig stewed with rice and a 'bruccio,' a very good national dish, being a mould of whipped sheep's milk, which, when eaten with

bread and sugar, is very palatable. This sumptuous repast was washed down with Corsican wine, not a very good drink, as it has a slight taste of turpentine, though, whether this is natural to it, or arises from the previous occupation of the bottle, I was never able to discover. After lunch, as we went out, we saw that the black pig had become white by steaming. I vainly endeavoured to get our landlady to give me the bill, but she was much too busy holding a leg of the pig while it was dissected by a man, but as she was able to make a mental calculation, I excused any further formalities.

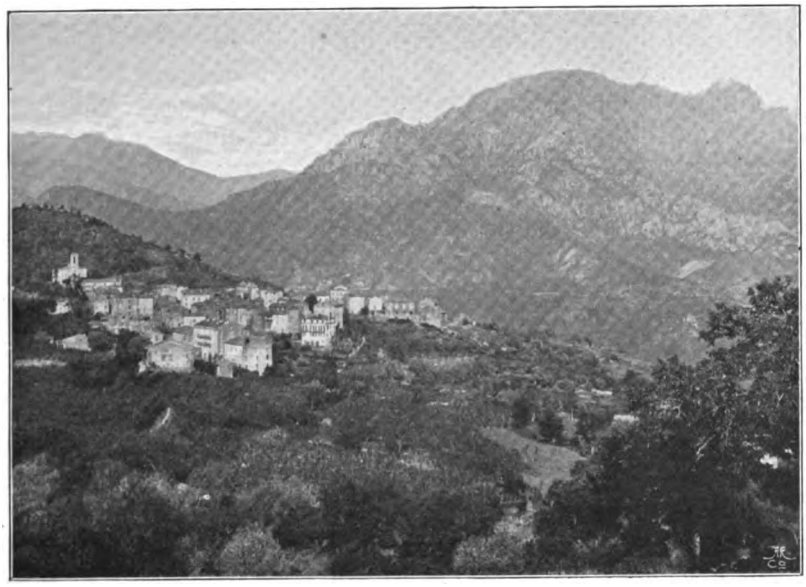
Our drive now took us down to the sea again, over one or two flat marshes where fever is very prevalent in the summer. The Government is, however, endeavouring to render these plains more healthy by planting rows of eucalyptus along the road-sides and on the banks of the marshes, and where this is possible good results have attended the work.

Suddenly our road turned inland and began winding up a narrow gorge; high on either side rose the 'maquis,' stretching away, we were told, for some miles. The 'maquis' is impenetrable bush or scrub some twelve feet high, where, in a wild tangle grow arbutus, Mediterranean heath, lentisk, myrtle and cistus, giving out a delicious scent.

For two hours we slowly ascended, leaving behind the warmth of the plains, and drawing nearer to the snow mountains.

It was difficult to realise in the wildness of the scenery and the sense of loneliness how near we were to civilisation, for except for a few shepherds we had not passed a human being since we lunched. Just as the sun was setting we reached the summit, and a glorious view met our eyes. Far behind us, in between the distant peaks, we saw the blue sea, while in front, just below us on the sides of a basin formed by the mountains, perched the little village of Vico, the smoke forming a curtain through which we looked down on it. With a crack of the whip we dashed up to a tall, dirty house, which proved to be the inn. An elderly Italian who spoke no French came to meet us, and led us up the stone stairs, merely hewn from the rock against which the house leant, into a big low room. A roaring open fire of logs enabled us to see the layers of dust on the floor. Out of this room on one side were two tiny bedrooms, which we were offered, and on the other, one small room at that time occupied by a Corsican commercial traveller. The beds were clean if the rooms were otherwise. Water is always a scarcity indoors, and

it is well to make up your mind on arriving as to whether you would rather wash your hands or have soup for dinner. You must make your choice, because, as a rule, there is in the house only one small saucepan of water, which can be used for either purpose but is not sufficient for both. As an old traveller, perhaps I may give a hint—'Have the soup.' More water can be obtained from the village well, but if you send out for it the delay is great, as the woman who goes for it (it would be too fatiguing work for a man) would meet all her gossips there, and, bubbling over with



VICO

the news of your arrival, would communicate it to each fresh-comer and linger on with a pleasant feeling of self-importance.

We at once ordered dinner—a grand word, but the result of which generally fell short of the title. While we were warming ourselves the door was flung open, by a stalwart man, who held it so for a girl who followed him, striding along with her arms akimbo and my portmanteau on her head, which she had carried up the stairs in the same way, and the weight of which did not distress her herculean frame. Dinner followed, consisting of soup, some chicken, white beans, then some more chicken—probably a playmate of the other to judge by a similar toughness—and a bruccio. The Corsican 'commercial' dined with us and was very

amusing, as he had travelled all over Corsica. He was much surprised to see an English lady up-country, and perhaps his manner showed in slight details that his experience of ladies was not as large as it was of his native country. However, he gave me an excellent cigar, which was perhaps not surprising, as he travelled for a tobacconist. We retired early to bed, solemnly escorted by the elderly Italian with lighted candle, who, putting it down at our door, with uplifted hands prayed the good God to grant us every blessing, and guard us while we slept, in the purest Italian.

The next morning, after a scanty toilet and a hasty cup of excellent coffee, we were off very early, followed by the blessings of our host, who, with his white hair and white moustache, clad in a neat black suit, looked out of place in this rough mountain hamlet. All the morning we drove over the mountains, here and there passing through an ilex wood carpeted with crocuses, till at midday we reached our destination, the small village of Evisa lying just beneath the snow-line, with a glorious view over the sea.

We were not expected at the inn, but an omelette and blackbirds were quickly provided for our *déjeuner*, with many promises of better things for our dinner. We were anxious to go through the forest of Aïtone, which was close by, and is one of the biggest fir forests in the island.

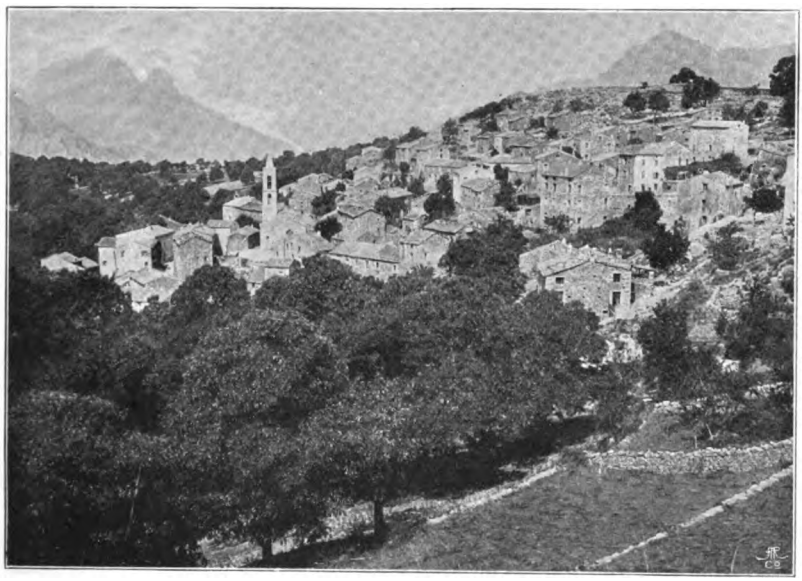
I asked our host if he would give us a trap of any sort, wishing to rest our own ponies. After some search a villager offered us his mule and cart, with his nephew—a picturesque boy—to drive. The whole population turned out to see us start. It must have been a funny sight. We have often wondered which was the oldest, the mule, the cart, or the harness; each, at any rate, were of a unique pattern and beyond description.

The drive through the dark and lovely forest was worth the temporary discomfort, which was added to by the road in places being covered with deep snow or ice.

In the middle of our drive we stopped to visit a *maison forestière*, where the forest guards live and in which visitors can get permission to stay. The hospitable wife of the sergeant gave us some horrible liqueur which my wife, with the boldness of a woman, drank to the dregs, but which I emptied outside the house, where a hypocritical enthusiasm of the view, which I found was limited to the fresh-washed nether garments of the guards, had led me. In the evening our host was most anxious for us to eat of the staple food of the country, a chestnut polenta.

The quantity of chestnuts to be obtained for nothing accounts for the somewhat idle habits of the people. They earn no money because they want so very little; they do not drink much, unless it happens to be a festival, and their food is chiefly provided by the bounty of nature.

On the following day, as the drive was unusually long to our next stopping place, we had intended to start very early, and accordingly our horses were brought round in good time to the carriage, which always remained in the street before the door all the night. But, alas! for our good resolutions, we had neither



EVISA

counted on our own popularity nor on that of our *cocher*. All the villagers were collected round the carriage anxious to shake either our hands or those of our driver. Common courtesy, and an appreciation of their hospitality, forbade our hurrying over these farewells, and we were, therefore, considerably behind our time before this affecting scene was brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

What a glorious drive we had that day! For the first two hours we descended by a steep zigzag road, sometimes going through tunnels cut out of the rock, in places passing along a narrow elbow where we were told the convicts had been let down

in baskets to hew out the road from the face of the hill, until we reached the deep blue sea. For some time we drove along the coast, and were thus enabled to see one of the most marvellous pieces of rock scenery it has ever been my good fortune to come across in my many travels. These rocks are called 'Les Calanches,' and are of a brilliant red colour, fashioned in the most diverse shapes, assuming the forms of dogs, bears, and gurgoyles; but so delicately has nature moulded them that it is hard to believe that man has not been exercising his handiwork upon them. Raising their rosy peaks, as they do from the clear blue sea, with the dark green maquis behind them, and their crannies carpeted with ferns, they offer a wealth of colouring which must arrest the

PUNTA ROSSA, NEAR CARGHESE

attention and arouse the enthusiasm of the most hardened tourist. While we were resting our horses in the middle of the day, my wife endeavoured to get a sketch of these rocks, but her efforts were much impeded by some of the juvenile population. They had evidently profited by the lessons civilisation had taught them, for there had already dawned on them a knowledge of art and the instinct of commerce. The first they displayed by their criticism of the sketch; the second by their offers to pose as models for two sous.

It was evening when we reached Carghesé, where we were to stay the night. This town has an historic interest not possessed by the others we visited. In years gone by it had been given to the Greeks by the Genoese, and it still preserves its Greek character,

both in the type of its inhabitants and in its large Greek church, which is almost the most remarkable feature of the place. If it had not been for the similarity in the inn and the want of accommodation, one could almost have imagined oneself transported into another country.

After making the acquaintance of our hostess, we started for a stroll, and, walking round the village, we came to the well. Around it were gathered a bevy of dark Grecian girls, each with a large earthen jug, which was carried on the head; here they stood laughing and chatting, awaiting their turn to fill their pitchers, and exchanging a smiling greeting with us as we passed.

A VIEW NEAR AJACCIO

We wandered on until we came to the edge of the cliff on which the village is built, and looked down on to the fertile plain below, in the vineyards and maize fields of which the men were all working, many of them assisted by their stalwart helpmates.

A steep rocky path ran down the side of the hill, which we followed for a short way, and there we sat on a gate and watched the sun setting on the sea. Soon we heard the distant tinkling of mule bells, and we saw all the toilers in the plain leaving their work and starting up the hill for the village. On they came, some riding mules, others walking, and driving in front of them their herds of goats, one continuous stream of picturesque life.

Not one of them had ever seen us before, but with the

courtesy of the country every man, and each group of men that passed, raised their hats to us and wished us good evening, while the women, too, greeted us with a like friendliness that made us feel no longer strangers in their village.

It was dark before we reached our inn, and we found we were to share our evening meal with a young Corsican avocat, whose presence I only mention because he possessed two remarkable qualities. One was his taciturnity, which was unexampled in my experience, and the second was the celerity with which he despatched boiled eggs. He knocked off the top, clapped the egg to his mouth, and with a weird sound—the only one he appeared capable of uttering—he—to use a polite word—inhaled the inside. Several disappeared with inconceivable swiftness, and then his repast was over.

The next morning we started on the final stage of our drive, and by midday had joined the road along which we had passed on our first day.

Lovely as Ajaccio looked, comfortable as our hotel was, welcome as were the letters and papers, and last, but not least, refreshing as were the baths and a dinner of more substantial food than eggs and blackbirds, yet it was with deep regret that we realised that our four days' expedition was over. The beauty of the scenery, the simplicity of the life, the hospitality of the people exercised a fascination over us which those only can realise who have come under its spell.

If there are those who seek for rest and quiet amidst the beauties of nature, let me recommend to them a driving tour in Corsica.

A BLACK-LETTER DAY

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Now the dry-fly fisherman—he who 'fishes the rise'—has his own full store of vexations, irritations and obstacles to contend against before his two brace of heavy trout are landed, and the day takes on a rosy tinge. Him I will leave to his own high-class miseries, being but mistily conversant with them myself; but as a wet-fly fisherman—one who 'fishes the stream,' and is called a 'chuck-and-chancer' by his betters—I can unfold tales of woe and complicated tribulation second to none. My experience in this sort ranges from a midge in the eye to a broken rod, from the loss of self-respect, which is merely incidental and can be recovered before one returns to one's fellow-men, to the loss of a fly-book in the middle of a great evening rise—a circumstance fundamental, tragical, heart-shaking even to look back upon after many seasons.

An ordinary fishing day is a magic kaleidoscopic procession of fleeting hours full of change and chance; of hope dwindling to despair, of dejection suddenly evaporating before an alteration in fortune; of rain and sun; of kicks for your halfpence; of undeserved success, when Providence sends a heavy trout to a bad cast; of unmerited failure when, after doing everything like an article in the 'Badminton Magazine,' your landing-net never gets there in time, and the trout rolls gasping back to life and liberty with a fishy prayer of thanksgiving. Like a round of average golf, a day with the wet fly is compact of joy and gloom, of bright mornings and sombre twilights, of leaden dawns and glorious sunsets; but it happens, too, that exceptional occasions rise above the usual level, that red- and black-letter days stand forth conspicuously to send a shiver down the spine or a

pulse of pleasure to the heart, as memory serves them up in turn.

The red-letter days can be left to themselves for once. We have all heard about them until we grow sceptical. Personally I am weary of the phenomenal experiences other men have had and written about. Who knows not that monster trout that lives under a dock-leaf or a dead log, and has triumphed over generations of fly-fishers and ignored them or broken them—heart and line—and gone on flourishing like the green bay tree until the advent of the individual who writes the article? When a man begins about that trout, I stop and turn to cricket, or big game, or dominoes, or anything, because I know he is going to catch it and find it weigh a pound more than anybody thought. And he will be tremendously sportsmanlike about it, and most modest; he will marvel how he came to do it, and certainly never remember to have killed more than ten heavier fish in all his born days. No; I write of the medal's reverse. I never caught a trout nobody else could—on the contrary, nearly everybody can catch them where I have failed to do so; I never dropped an olive dun on the point of a rush fifteen yards off and saw it fall like a live insect into the mouth of a three-pounder waiting underneath. I never play fish like men do in magazines, and steer them dexterously between Scylla and Charybdis, and astound keepers and such people. If I steer anything dexterously and get above myself at an appearance of increasing skill, it usually turns out to be a dace or some such paltry thing. Of course, any fool can be dexterous with a dace.

Here, then, is a black-letter day—a day culled from other days not unlike it, and yet, upon the whole, more artistically and dramatically complete, from start to finish. It had about it the slowly accumulated horror of a Greek tragedy. From a moaning, premonitory note in the upper chambers of the air, so to say, the day developed into dark tempestuous disaster, into woes unimagined, into horror on horror's head.

And yet the morning dawned all right, and the stream—a Dartmoor one—never promised better. The mighty fastnesses of the heather and grey granite towered above me; from afar came the jangle of sheep bells and the bellow of kine; the air was alive with giant clouds, and the water twinkled lead under their shadows, golden where sunshine touched its dimples and wove patterns of pure light on the oily tremors of precious pools. I knew the river, and was certain as an angler can be upon such a delicate point that the fish must be moving freely. My companion

—a medical man of sanguine spirit—left me at an ideal reach below a 'stickle,' and passed forward to begin his own operations a mile up stream. Here, then, was I, happy, healthy, contented, a child of Nature, in Nature's lap; and the sun shone, and the yellow-hammers—golden birds upon golden thorns—uttered their little lonely notes from the shining furze bushes above.

The curtain rises on happiness and content—like the first scene in the melodrama at the Home Farm, when the hero

I STARTED TO ANGLE

pitches real straw on a real pitchfork, and the real cow is driven in to be milked, and nobody has ever heard about that mortgage, which is going to take five acts of fatuous thickheadedness, picturesque wickedness, and unnecessary misery to clear up.

In an attempt to catch a live fly at the water's edge and study his general particulars, I slipped my foot, and fell in. It was no mere trifling accident, but a ponderous collapse—up to my middle. One moment I stood there a smiling, happy thing, in complete harmony with its environment, the next behold me a shivering, scowling wretch, chattering to myself about inflammation

of the lungs, with one pocket full of water, the other a mess of loose matches, pulpy paper, and disintegrated sandwiches. I said to myself, 'Keep moving and keep your temper. If you do so, mere regard for justice will make Providence pity you, and very likely send a miraculous draught of fishes as a reward.'

I prepared to angle, and meantime it got about among gnats and flies that I was alone, half drowned, and wholly unprotected. They hastened in their myriads to the spot, fell upon me like an army, made up luncheon parties on every unprotected part of my person, and compared notes afterwards as to what particular point of attack produced the best results. All these horrible things happened in a delightful dingle where a spring sent its rivulet to join the parent stream. Here heather fledged the granite rocks with purple, and woodbine fell over them in clusters of creamy trumpets where the bees hummed. Upon the adjacent marsh was reflected the sky and white clouds; and the rich moisture bore filigree of red sundews (their little white blossoms out), emerald sphagnum mosses, starry bog asphodels, seeding cotton-grass, and the cross-leaved heath, like pink pearls powdered on a ground of darkest agate.

I started to fish, and moved damply and desolately along with a procession of flies streaming out behind, like a memento of the fourth plague. Cattle, too, approached to jeer at my sufferings. I loathe all cattle, especially when fishing in hot weather. They are always knee deep in my favourite pools, and if not, they roam about after me with feminine curiosity, and keep my nerves on the rack. Because you never know what a great hulking cow or bullock standing exactly three yards behind you may do when your back is turned. These present beasts seemed in doubt whether to advance in a body and put me out of my misery, or leave me and my misfortunes in the hands of Fate. I flung a stone at a heifer and hurt her slightly, and gloated over her temporary annoyance. Then I fished steadily, sullenly, to show that, come what may, man is master of time and the things of time.

Many of Nature's marvellous creations I caught, but not a fish. Cross winds and aerial eddies wholly unfamiliar to me, kept appropriating the fly, a wild thirst for novelty overtook my 'blue upright.' To the very tops of high prickly perilous trees he aspired, and enjoyed the prospect so greatly upon reaching it that only at personal risk and danger could I get him down. Then, as I put out my hand to catch him, he would lightly depart with the gladsome irresponsibility of the natural insect. As for the fish, they played with me; they jumped over the fly and swam

under it, rose short and played the fool as only a trout in the vein knows how. One little idiot—he might have weighed three ounces, deliberately hooked himself on to my fly by the stomach. He went gaily off when liberated, and doubtless regarded the exploit as an excellent bit of humour.

A WILD THIRST FOR NOVELTY OVERTOOK MY 'BLUE UPRIGHT'.

Nothing but my indomitable courage sustained me during that trying hour.

I said, 'I will catch a trout to-day though the Heavens fall.'

The Heavens were sustained, but I caught a trout at last. I did not play him or handle him with any skill, but just dragged

him out and killed him, and felt the better for killing him. And then, while lying on the grass, without any visible agency, there developed in my cast one of those tangles which grow of themselves, and deride patience and self-control, and take the stuffing out of half an hour of precious time before they are conquered. It was a complication beside which the Gordian knot had been a mere cat's cradle, and being in no mood for delicate manipulation of involved gossamer, I had the thing whistling down the wind in exactly three seconds, and turned for a new cast and fly.

THOSE TANGLES WHICH GROW OF THEMSELVES

Then it was, after a lunch of one squashed sandwich, flavoured with wax matches, that I broke my rod in a vital spot. Strictly speaking, it is not fair to myself to say that I broke it. It was an old-fashioned, three-jointed, weather-worn affair, the companion of many years, and it had grown ancient in my service. I carried it in my hand at the time, and the blame of smashing it at the middle of the central joint will of course fall to me; but all I know is that I was merely drawing the fly a little irritably from a rush-head in mid-stream, after having missed a good one, when without a shadow of warning the rod burst asunder in the midst.

Other men would have abandoned sport there and then, and departed luridly whence they came, but my blood was up in the unequal struggle with a hard and unkindly Providence. Fish I would

unless stricken with paralysis or lightning or some heroic weapon. I said to Fate:

'It's no use; you won't choke me off like that. I'm not done with yet.'

Then I smiled genially at nature, and wound in my gear and kept calm, cool, and dignified. One does not cut ten yards off a favourite tapered line for fun. But this I did with lofty unconcern, and then set to work to splice that shattered middle joint. I convinced myself that old age was responsible for the accident,

I BROKE MY ROD IN A VITAL SPOT

and bound up my patriarchal rod tenderly with a father's care. It took me an hour, and it looked pretty ship-shape when I had finished. I sat and thought and waited for the evening rise, and felt rather self-righteous about the way I had conducted this reverse. I could not for the life of me recollect the name of a single man who would have come through such an ordeal in such flying colours.

It was a red-gold sunset, the gnats danced old country dances over the water, and I felt my heart fill with peace at the thought of nature's beauty and my own dignified appearance.

Here I sat, and represented Conscious Intelligence reigning self-collected and alone by the water-side.

A nice fish moved, and with proper regard for my rod's debilitated condition, I cast forth with a dry fly, deceived the trout, hooked him, and found myself fairly into a fish of a size quite exceptional in those streams. Something told me he was a gone fish from the outset. The doctrine of rewards is strong in an angler's heart at such moments, and he naturally credits Providence with that sportsmanlike sense of justice he himself possesses. But on this occasion Heaven had taken a certain definite line with me, and meant to see it through. My fish fought like ten demons and, enfeebled as I doubtless was by a day of exceptional suffering and privation, I found myself no match for him. He tried the bottom, but from that I saved him; then he leapt into the air, and even this had not sufficed, but the powers and principalities we wrestle with on these occasions sent a snag, and if the fish had seen it and jumped on purpose, he could not have dropped the line more beautifully across this villainous and unfair obstacle. Of course, he broke me, and as he did so, by some supremely complicated evolution, for which I deny the responsibility, the lance in the butt of my rod turned upon me and stabbed my left hand to the bone. I have never heard that this ever happened to a fisherman before or since. I confess it finished me. For the first time I realised Who I was fighting against. I pitched my vile rod on the ground and gave way altogether, and banned the river and the things under the river, and hit out from the shoulder and let the Powers have it hot and peppery from a lacerated soul. Without the adjectives and decorations my remarks ran like this:

'What have I done to be bullied and plagued like this? It's shameful and blackguardly, and I won't stand it—not for twenty Providences. I've had enough to break my heart a thousand times to-day, and somebody's got to pay for it. I'll turn the tables yet; I'll go away from this beast of a valley and write something that shall be printed and read. I'll ruin the place—I'll ruin the whole of Dartmoor—and then, when it's too late, Providence will be sorry. No sane man can ever look at this water again when they've read me; and as for myself, may I be doubly, trebly, eternally lost if ever I fish for trout again as long as I live.'

I said all this to myself twice, and then aloud to some sheep which collected to witness the solemn spectacle of a human intelligence at war with things in general. My hand sent forth

a stream of gore, and dyed the meadow grass. For a moment I thought of deliberately passing away there, with a view to hurting my friend's feelings when he should return and find me stark and stiff, but private reasons determined me to live. So I rose up and took down my rod, and went after my companion to seek him professionally. Anon I found him, keeping the cows and flies and things off with one hand, and catching trout with the other. He was happy, cool, contented, and self-contained.

He said 'Hullo, old cock, how goes it? Why, what's the matter?'

And I said 'Don't "old cock" me, if you please. The matter is that I've been stabbed and am bleeding to death, for all I know to the contrary. Nothing to anybody else, of course, but very annoying to me.'

He told me afterwards that I was a pitiable show—a thing too sad to be funny, too funny to be wholly sad.

'Artificial flies were sticking out of you everywhere; you were muddy and bloody, and blue with rage; you carried your rod in a bundle of picturesque fragments; you scattered gore to the right and left; and above your head ephemeral insects, horse-flies and blue-bottles, buzzed in a regular halo.'

But at the time he did not dare to take me in anything but a serious spirit.

'Very annoying, indeed, I should think,' he said. 'Let's have a look. By Jove! Quite a nasty little cut. How did you do it?'

'I didn't do it,' I answered, 'and I refuse to give any particulars.'

He whistled and examined my hand. Then he polished it up and tied me tightly round the wrist, and doubtless treated the injury with proper knowledge.

'Now we're better,' he announced in a stupid professional voice.

'Speak for yourself,' I said.

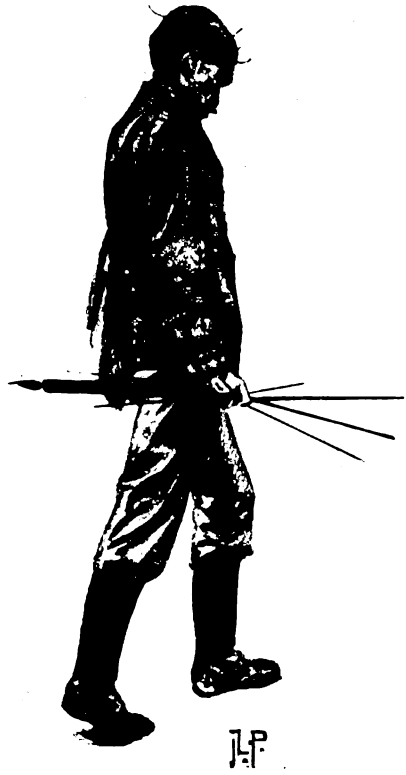
He whistled again, then made a suggestion. 'You'll chuck it if you take my advice.'

'"Chuck it,"' I answered bitterly. 'Yes, I rather think I shall chuck it. Heaven knows where my intelligence and reasoning powers have been all these weary years. I'm mad when I think of the time I've wasted over this dastardly demoralising tomfoolery.'

'Well, that's all right; we'll meet at supper. They're moving just for the moment. I've killed a dozen quite decent tr——but I needn't bother you with that. Get back to the farm and change, and have "four fingers," and drink to "tight lines" to-morrow.'

I rather fear I damned tight lines. My degradation was such that I did not even thank the man for ministering to my hand. I just stalked away and skulked back to our quarters.

And then the sunset lights and the huge loneliness of the untamed moor steadied me; and of course, I sang small and was sorry; while that night I ate the leek and made it up with Nature, and stretched some new casts, and even regained a little of my self-respect by listening, with patience and without retaliation, to fishing stories from my friend until the night was far spent.



SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.

BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

No. V.—LISHEEN RACES, SECOND-HAND

It may or may not be agreeable to have attained the age of thirty-eight, but, judging from old photographs, the privilege of being nineteen has also its drawbacks. I turned over page after page of an ancient book in which were enshrined portraits of the friends of my youth, singly, in David and Jonathan couples, and in groups in which I, as it seemed to my mature and possibly jaundiced perception, always contrived to look the most immeasurable young bounder of the lot. Our faces were fat, and yet I cannot remember ever having been considered fat in my life; we indulged in low-necked shirts, in 'Jemima' ties with diagonal stripes; we wore coats that seemed three sizes too small, and trousers that were three sizes too big; we also wore small whiskers.

I stopped at last at one of the David and Jonathan memorial portraits. Yes, here was the object of my researches; this stout and earnestly romantic youth was Leigh Kelway, and that fatuous and chubby young person seated on the arm of his chair was myself. Leigh Kelway was a young man ardently believed in by a large circle of admirers, headed by himself and seconded by me, and for some time after I had left Magdalen for Sandhurst, I maintained a correspondence with him on large and abstract subjects. This phase of our friendship did not survive; I went soldiering to India, and Leigh Kelway took honours and moved suitably on into politics, as is the duty of an earnest young Radical with useful family connections and an independent income. Since then I had at intervals seen in the papers the name of the Honourable Basil Leigh Kelway mentioned as a speaker at elections, as a writer of thoughtful articles in the

reviews, but we had never met, and nothing could have been less expected by me than the letter, written from Mrs. Raverty's Hotel, Skebawn, in which he told me he was making a tour in Ireland with Lord Wandlebury, to whom he was private secretary. His chief was at present having a few days' fishing near Killarney, and he himself, not being a fisherman, was collecting statistics on various points connected with the Liquor Question in Ireland. He had heard that I was in the neighbourhood, and was kind enough to add that it would give him much pleasure to meet me again.

With a stir of the old enthusiasm I wrote begging him to be my guest for as long as it suited him, and the following afternoon he arrived at Shreelane. The stout young friend of my youth had changed considerably. His important nose and slightly prominent teeth remained, but his wavy hair had withdrawn intellectually from his temples; his eyes had acquired a statesmanlike absence of expression, and his neck had grown long and birdlike. It was his first visit to Ireland, as he lost no time in telling me, and he and his chief had already collected much valuable information on the subject to which they had dedicated the Easter recess. He further informed me that he thought of popularising the subject in a novel, and therefore intended to, as he put it, 'master the brogue' before his return.

During the next three days I did my best for Leigh Kelway. I turned him loose on Father Scanlan; I showed him Mohona, our champion village, that boasts fifteen public-houses out of twenty buildings of sorts and a railway station; I took him to hear the prosecution of a publican for selling drink on a Sunday, which gave him an opportunity of studying perjury as a fine art, and of hearing a lady, on whom police suspicion justly rested, profoundly summed up by the sergeant as 'a woman who had th' appairance of having knocked at a back door.'

The net result of these experiences has not yet been given to the world by Leigh Kelway. For my own part, I had at the end of three days arrived at the conclusion that his society, when combined with a note-book and a thirst for statistics, was not what I used to find it at Oxford. I therefore welcomed a suggestion from my friend and neighbour, Mr. Flurry Knox, M.F.H., that we should accompany him to some typical country races, got up by the farmers at a place called Lisheen, some twelve miles away. It was the worst road in the district, the races of the most grossly unorthodox character; in fact, it was the very place for Leigh Kelway to collect impressions of Irish

COUNTRY RACES OF A TYPICAL SORT

life, and in any case it was a blessed opportunity of disposing of him for the day.

In my guest's attire next morning I discerned an unbending from the rôle of cabinet minister towards that of sportsman; the outlines of the note-book might be traced in his breast pocket, but traversing it was the strap of a pair of field glasses, and his light grey suit was smart enough for Goodwood.

Flurry was to drive us to the races at one o'clock, and we walked to Tory Cottage by the short cut over the hill, in the sunny beauty of an April morning. Up to the present the weather had kept me in a more or less apologetic condition; anyone who has entertained a guest in the country knows the unjust weight of responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the host in the matter of climate, and Leigh Kelway, after two drenchings, had become sarcastically resigned to what I felt he regarded as my mismanagement.

Flurry took us into the house for a drink and a biscuit, to keep us going, as he said, till 'we lifted some luncheon out of the Castle Knox people at the races,' and it was while we were thus engaged that the first disaster of the day occurred. The dining-room door was open, so also was the window of the little staircase just outside it, and through the window travelled sounds that told of the close proximity of the stableyard; the clattering of hoofs on cobble stones, and voices uplifted in loud conversation. Suddenly from this region there arose a screech of the laughter peculiar to kitchen flirtation, followed by the clank of a bucket, the plunging of a horse, and then an uproar of wheels and galloping hoofs. An instant afterwards Flurry's chestnut cob, in a dogcart, dashed at full gallop into view, with the reins streaming behind him, and two men in hot pursuit. Almost before I had time to realise what had happened, Flurry jumped through the half-opened window of the dining-room like a clown at a pantomime, and joined in the chase, but the cob was resolved to make the most of his chance, and went away down the drive and out of sight at a pace that distanced everyone save the kennel terrier, who sped in shrieking ecstasy beside him.

'Oh merciful hour!' exclaimed a female voice behind me. Leigh Kelway and I were by this time watching the progress of events from the gravel, in company with the remainder of Flurry's household. 'The horse is desthroyed! Wasn't that the quare start he took! And all in the world I done was to slap a bucket of wather at Michael out the windy, and 'twas himself got it in place of Michael!'

'Ye'll never ate another bit, Bridgie Norris,' replied the cook, with the exulting pessimism of her kind. 'The Masther 'll have your life!'

Both speakers shouted at the top of their voices, probably because in spirit they still followed afar the flight of the cob.

Leigh Kelway looked serious as we walked on down the drive. I almost dared to hope that a note on the degrading oppression of Irish retainers was shaping itself. Before we reached the bend of the drive the rescue party was returning with the fugitive, all, with the exception of the kennel terrier, looking extremely gloomy. The cob had been confronted by a wooden gate, which he had unhesitatingly taken in his stride, landing on his head on the farther side with the gate and the cart on top of him, and had arisen with a lame foreleg, a cut on his nose, and several other minor wounds.

'You'd think the brute had been fighting the cats, with all the scratches and scrapes he has on him!' said Flurry, casting a vengeful eye at Michael, 'and one shaft's broken and so is the dashboard. I haven't another horse in the place; they're all out at grass, and so there's an end of the races!'

We all three stood blankly on the hall-door steps and watched the wreck of the trap being trundled up the avenue.

'I'm very sorry you're done out of your sport,' said Flurry to Leigh Kelway, in tones of deplorable sincerity; 'perhaps, as there's nothing else to do, you'd like to see the hounds——?'

I felt for Flurry, but of the two I felt more for Leigh Kelway as he accepted this alleviation. He disliked dogs, and held the newest views on sanitation, and I knew what Flurry's kennels could smell like. I was lighting a precautionary cigarette, when we caught sight of an old man riding up the drive. Flurry stopped short.

'Hold on a minute,' he said; 'here's an old chap that often brings me horses for the kennels; I must see what he wants.'

The man dismounted and approached Mr. Knox, hat in hand, towing after him a gaunt and ancient black mare with a big knee.

'Well, Barrett,' began Flurry, surveying the mare with his hands in his pockets, 'I'm not giving the hounds meat this month, or only very little.'

'Ah, Master Flurry,' answered Barrett, 'it's you that's pleasant! Is it give the like o' this one for the dogs to ate! She's a vallyble strong young mare, no more than shixteen years of age, and ye'd sooner be lookin' at her goin' under a side-car than eatin' your dinner.'

'There isn't as much meat on her as 'd fatten a jackdaw,' said Flurry, clinking the silver in his pockets as he searched for a matchbox. 'What are you asking for her?'

The old man drew cautiously up to him.

'Master Flurry,' he said solemnly, 'I'll sell her to *your* honour for five pounds, and she'll be worth ten after you give her a month's grass.'

Flurry lit his cigarette; then he said imperturbably, 'I'll give you seven shillings for her.'

Old Barrett put on his hat in silence, and in silence buttoned his coat and took hold of the stirrup leather. Flurry remained immovable.

'Master Flurry,' said old Barrett suddenly, with tears in his voice, 'you must make it eight, sir!'

'Michael!' called out Flurry with apparent irrelevance, 'run up to your father's and ask him would he lend me a loan of his side-car.'

Half an hour later we were, improbable as it may seem, on our way to Lisheen races. We were seated upon an outside-car of immemorial age, whose joints seemed to open and close again as it swung in and out of the ruts, whose tattered cushions stank of rats and mildew, whose wheels staggered and rocked like the legs of a drunken man. Between the shafts jogged the latest addition to the kennel larder, the eight-shilling mare. Flurry sat on one side, and kept her going at a rate of not less than four miles an hour; Leigh Kelway and I held on to the other.

'She'll get us as far as Lynch's anyway,' said Flurry, abandoning his first contention that she could do the whole distance, as he pulled her on to her legs after her fifteenth stumble, 'and he'll lend us some sort of a horse, if it was only a mule.'

'Do you notice that these cushions are very damp?' said Leigh Kelway to me, in a hollow undertone.

'Small blame to them if they are!' replied Flurry. 'I've no doubt but they were out under the rain all day yesterday at Mrs. Hurly's funeral.'

Leigh Kelway made no reply, but he took his note-book out of his pocket and sat on it.

We arrived at Lynch's at a little past three, and were there confronted by the next disappointment of this disastrous day. The door of Lynch's farmhouse was locked, and nothing replied to our knocking except a puppy, who barked hysterically from within.

'All gone to the races,' said Flurry philosophically, picking his way round the manure heap. 'No matter, here is the filly in the shed here. I know he's had her under a car.'

An agitating ten minutes ensued, during which Leigh Kelway and I got the eight-shilling mare out of the shafts and the harness, and Flurry, with our inefficient help, crammed the young mare into them. As Flurry had stated that she had been driven before, I was bound to believe him, but the difficulty of getting the bit into her mouth was remarkable, and so also was the crab-like manner in which she sidled out of the yard, with Flurry and myself at her head, and Leigh Kelway hanging on to the back of the car to keep it from jamming in the gateway.

'Sit up on the car now,' said Flurry when we got out on to the road; 'I'll lead her on a bit. She's been ploughed anyway; one side of her mouth's as tough as a gad!'

Leigh Kelway threw away the wisp of grass with which he had been cleaning his hands, and mopped his intellectual forehead; he was very silent. We both mounted the car, and Flurry, with the reins in his hand, walked beside the filly, who, with her tail clasped in, moved onward in a succession of short jerks.

'Oh, she's all right!' said Flurry, beginning to run, and dragging the filly into a trot; 'once she gets started——' Here the filly spied a pig in a neighbouring field, and despite the fact that she had probably eaten out of the same trough with it, she gave a violent side spring, and broke into a gallop.

'Now we're off!' shouted Flurry, making a jump at the car and clambering on; 'if the traces hold we'll do!'

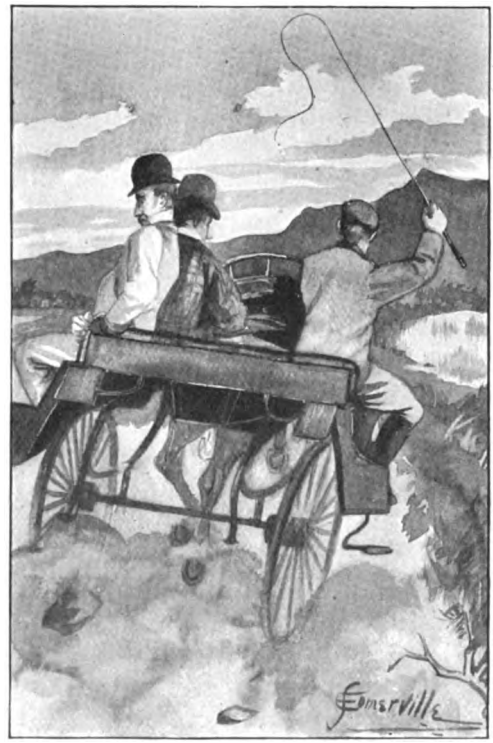
The English language is powerless to suggest the view-halloo with which Mr. Knox ended his speech, or to do more than indicate the rigid anxiety of Leigh Kelway's face as he regained his balance after the preliminary jerk, and clutched the back rail. It must be said for Lynch's filly that she did not kick; she merely fled, like a dog with a kettle tied to its tail, from the pursuing rattle and jingle behind her, with the shafts buffeting her dusty sides as the car swung to and fro. Whenever she showed any signs of slackening, Flurry loosed another yell at her that renewed her panic, and thus we precariously covered another two or three miles of our journey.

Had it not been for a large stone lying on the road, and had the filly not chosen to swerve so as to bring the wheel on top of it, I dare say we might have got to the races; but by an unfortunate coincidence both these things occurred, and when we recovered from the consequent shock, the tire of one of the

wheels had come off, and was trundling with cumbrous gaiety into the ditch. Flurry stopped the filly and began to laugh; Leigh Kelway said something startlingly unparliamentary under his breath.

'Well, it might be worse,' Flurry said consolingly as he lifted the tire on to the car; 'we're not half a mile from a forge.'

We walked that half-mile in funereal procession behind the car; the glory had departed from the weather, and an ugly wall of cloud was rising up out of the west to meet the sun; the hills had darkened and lost colour, and the white bog cotton shivered in a cold wind that smelt of rain.



THE FILLY FLED LIKE A DOG WITH A KETTLE TIED TO ITS TAIL

By a miracle the smith was not at the races, owing, as he explained, to his having 'the toothaches,' the two facts combined producing in him a morosity only equalled by that of Leigh Kelway. The smith's sole comment on the situation was to unharness the filly, and drag her into the forge, where he tied her up. He then proceeded to whistle viciously on his fingers in the direction of a cottage, and to command, in tones of thunder, some unseen creature to bring over a couple of baskets of turf. The turf arrived in process of time, on a woman's back, and was arranged in a circle in a yard at the back of the forge. The tire was bedded in it, and the turf was with difficulty kindled at different points.

'Ye'll not get to the races this day,' said the smith, yielding to a sardonic satisfaction; 'the turf's wet, and I haven't one to

do a hand's turn for me.' He laid the wheel on the ground and lit his pipe.

Leigh Kelway looked pallidly about him over the spacious empty landscape of brown mountain slopes patched with golden furze and seamed with grey walls; I wondered if he were as hungry as I. We sat on stones opposite the smouldering ring of turf and smoked, and Flurry beguiled the smith into grim and calumnious confidences about every horse in the country. After about an hour, during which the turf went out three times, and the weather became more and more threatening, a girl with a red petticoat over her head appeared at the gate of the yard, and said to the smith:

'The horse is gone away from ye.'

'Where?' exclaimed Flurry, springing to his feet.

'I met him walking wesht the road there below, and when I thought to turn him he commenced to gallop.'

'Pulled her head out of the headstall,' said Flurry, after a rapid survey of the forge. 'She's near home by now.'

It was at this moment that the rain began; the situation could scarcely have been better stage-managed. After reviewing the position, Flurry and I decided that the only thing to do was to walk to a public-house a couple of miles further on, feed there if possible, hire a car, and go home.

It was an uphill walk, with mild, generous rain-drops striking thicker and thicker on our faces; no one talked, and the grey clouds crowded up from behind the hills like billows of steam. Leigh Kelway bore it all with egregious resignation. I cannot pretend that I was at heart sympathetic, but by virtue of being his host I felt responsible for the breakdown, for his light suit, for everything, and divined his sentiment of horror at the first sight of the public-house.

It was a long, low cottage, with a line of dripping elm-trees overshadowing it; empty cars and carts round its door, and a babel from within made it evident that the racegoers were pursuing a gradual homeward route. The shop was crammed with steaming countrymen, whose loud brawling voices, all talking together, roused my English friend to his first remark since we had left the forge.

'Surely, Yeates, we are not going into that place?' he said severely; 'those men are all drunk.'

'Ah, nothing to signify!' said Flurry, plunging in and driving his way through the throng like a plough. 'Here, Mary Kate!' he called to the girl behind the counter, 'tell your

mother we want some tea and bread and butter in the room inside.'

The smell of bad tobacco and spilt porter was choking; we worked our way through it after him towards the end of the shop, intersecting at every hand discussions about the races.

'Tom was very nice. He spared his horse all along, and then he put into him——' 'Well, at Goggin's corner the third horse was before the second, but he was goin' light on one leg.' 'I tell ye the mare had the hind leg fasht in the fore.' 'Clancy was dipping in the saddle.' 'T' was a dam nice race whatever——'

We gained the inner room at last, a cheerless apartment, adorned with sacred pictures, a sewing machine, and an array of supplementary tumblers and wineglasses; but, at all events, we had it so far to ourselves. At intervals during the next half-hour Mary Kate burst in with cups and plates, cast them on the table and disappeared, but of food there was no sign. After a further period of starvation and of listening to the noise in the shop, Flurry made a sortie, and, after lengthy and unknown adventures, reappeared carrying a huge brown teapot, and driving before him Mary Kate with the remainder of the repast. The bread tasted of mice, the butter of turf-smoke, the tea of brown paper, but we had got past the critical stage. I had entered upon my third round of bread and butter when the door was flung open, and my valued acquaintance, Slipper, slightly advanced in liquor, presented himself to our gaze. His bandy legs sprawled consequentially, his nose was redder than a coal of fire, his prominent eyes rolled crookedly upon us, and his left hand swept behind him the attempt of Mary Kate to frustrate his entrance.

'Good-evening to my vinerable friend, Mr. Flurry Knox!' he began, in the voice of a town crier, 'and to the Honourable Major Yeates, and the English gintleman!'

This impressive opening immediately attracted an audience from the shop, and the doorway filled with grinning faces as Slipper advanced further into the room.

'Why weren't ye at the races, Mr. Flurry?' he went on, his roving eye taking a grip of us all at the same time; 'sure the Miss Bennetts and all the ladies was asking where were ye.'

'It'd take some time to tell them that,' said Flurry, with his mouth full; 'but what about the races, Slipper? Had you good sport?'

'Sport is it? Divil so pleasant an afternoon ever you seen,' replied Slipper. He leaned against a side table, and all the glasses on it jingled. 'Does your honour know O'Driscoll?' he

went on irrelevantly. 'Sure you do. He was in your honour's stable. It's what we were all sayin'; it was a great pity your honour was not there, for the likin' you had to Driscoll.'

'That's thrue,' said a voice at the door.

'There wasn't one in the Barony but was gethered in it, through and fro,' continued Slipper, with a quelling glance at the interrupter; 'and there was tints for sellin' porther, and whisky as pliable as new milk, and boys goin' round the tints outside, feeling for heads with the big ends of their blackthorns, and all kinds of recreations, and the Sons of Liberty's piffler and dhrum band from Skebawn; though faith! there was more of thim runnin' to look at the races than what was playin' in it; not to mintion different occasions that the bandmasther was atin' his lunch within in the whisky tint.'

'But what about Driscoll?' said Flurry.

'Sure it's about him I'm tellin' ye,' replied Slipper, with the practised orator's watchful eye on his growing audience. ''Twas within in the same whisky tint meself was, with the bandmasther and a few of the lads, an' we buyin' a ha'porth o' crackers, when I seen me brave Driscoll landin' into the tint, and a pair o' thim long boots on him; him that hadn't a shoe nor a stocking to his foot when your honour had him picking grass out o' the stones behind in your yard. "Well," says I to meself, "we'll knock some spoort out of Driscoll!"

'"Come here to me, acushla!" says I to him; "I suppose it's some way wake in the legs y'are," says I, "an' the docthor put them on ye the way the people wouldn't thrample ye!"

'"May the divil choke ye!" says he, pleasant enough, but I knew by the blush he had he was vexed.

'"Then I suppose 'tis a left-tenant colonel y'are," says I; "yer mother must be proud out o' ye!" says I, "an' maybe ye'll lend her a loan o' thim waders when she's rinsin' yer bauneen in the river!" says I.

'"There'll be work out o' this!" says he, lookin' at me both sour and bitther.

'"Well indeed, I was thinkin' you were blue moulded for want of a batin'," says I. He was for fightin' us then, but afther we had him pacificated with about a quarther of a naggin o' sperrits, he told us he was goin' ridin' in a race.

'"An' what'll ye ride?" says I.

'"Owld Bocock's mare," says he.

'"Knipes!" says I, sayin' a great curse; "is it that little staggeen from the mountains; sure she's somethin' about the one

age with meself," says I. "Many's the time Jamesy Geoghegan and meself used to be dhrivin' her to Macroom with pigs an' all soorts," says I; "an' is it leppin stone walls ye want her to go now?"

'"Faith, there's walls and every vari'ty of obstackle in it," says he.

'"It'll be the best o' your play, so," says I, "to leg it away home out o' this."

'"An' who'll ride her, so?" says he.

'"LET THE DIVIL RIDE HER," SAYS I'

'"Let the divil ride her," says I.'

Leigh Kelway, who had been leaning back, seemingly half asleep, obeyed the hypnotism of Slipper's gaze, and opened his eyes.

'That was now all the conversation that passed between himself and meself,' resumed Slipper, 'and there was no great delay afther that till they said there was a race startin' and the dickens a one at all was goin' to ride only two, Driscoll, and one Clancy. With that then I seen Mr. Kinahane, the Petty Sessions

clerk, goin' round clearin' the coorse, an' I gethered a few o' the neighbours, an' we walked the fields hither and over till we seen the most of th' obstackles.

'"Stand aisy now by the plantation," says I; "if they get to come as far as this, believe me ye'll see spoort," says I, "an' 'twill be a convanient spot to encourage the mare if she's anyway wake in herself," says I, cuttin' somethin' about five foot of an ash sapling out o' the plantation.

'"That's yer sort!" says owld Bocock, that was thravellin' the racecoorse, peggin' a bit o' paper down with a thorn in front of every lep, the way Driscoll 'd know the handiest place to face her at it.

MR. KINAHANE, THE PETTY SESSIONS CLERK, GOIN' ROUND CLEARIN' THE COORSE

'Well, I hadn't barely thrimmed the ash plant——'

'Have you any jam, Mary Kate?' interrupted Flurry, whose meal had been in no way interfered with by either the story or the highly scented crowd who had come to listen to it.

'We have no jam, only thraycle, sir,' replied the invisible Mary Kate.

'I hadn't the switch barely thrimmed,' repeated Slipper firmly, 'when I heard the people screechin', an' I seen Driscoll an' Clancy comin' on, leppin' all before them, an' owld Bocock's mare bellusin' an' powdherin' along, an' bedad! whatever obstackle wouldn't throw *her* down, faith, she'd throw *it* down, an' there's the thraffic they had in it.

'"I declare to me sowl," says I, "if they continue on this way there's a great chance some one o' thim 'll win," says I.

'"Ye lie!" says the bandmasther, bein' a thrifle fulsome after his luncheon.

'WHATEVER OBSTACKLE WOULDN'T THROW HER DOWN, FAITH, SHE'D THROW IT DOWN'

'"I do not," says I, "in regard of seein' how soople them two boys is. Ye might observe," says I, "that if they have no convanient way to sit on the saddle, they'll ride the neck o' the horse till such time as they gets an occasion to lave it," says I.

'"Arrah, shut yer mouth!" says the bandmasther; "they're puckin' out this way now, an' may the divil admire me!" says he, "but Clancy has the other bet out, and the divil such leatherin' and beltin' of owld Bocock's mare ever you seen as what's in it!" says he.

'Well, when I seen them comin' to me, and Driscoll about the length of the plantation behind Clancy, I let a couple of bawls.

'"SKELP HER, YE BIG BRUTE," SAYS I'

'"Skelp her, ye big brute!" says I. "What good's in ye that ye aren't able to skelp her?"'

The yell and the histrionic flourish of his stick with which

Slipper delivered this incident brought down the house. Leigh Kelway was sufficiently moved to ask me in an undertone if 'skelp' was a local term.

'Well, Mr. Flurry, and gintlemen,' recommenced Slipper, 'I declare to ye when owld Bocock's mare heard thim roars she sthretched out her neck like a gandher, and when she passed me out she give a couple of grunts, and looked at me as ugly as a Christian.

'"Hah!" says I, givin' her a couple o' dhraws o' th' ash plant across the butt o' the tail, the way I wouldn't blind her; "I'll make ye grunt!" says I, "I'll nourish ye!"

'I knew well she was very frightful of th' ash plant since the winter Tommeen Sullivan had her under a sidecar. But now, in place of havin' any obligations to me, ye'd be surprised if ye heard the blaspheemious expressions of that young boy that was ridin' her; and whether it was over-anxious he was, turnin' around the way I'd hear him cursin', or whether it was some slither or slide came to owld Bocock's mare, I dunno, but she was bet up agin the last obstackle but two, and before ye could say "Shnipes," she was standin' on her two ears beyond in th' other field! I declare to ye, on the vartue of me oath, she stood that way till she reconnoithered what side would Driscoll fall, an' she turned about then and rolled on him as cosy as if he was meadow grass!'

Slipper stopped short; the people in the doorway groaned appreciatively; Mary Kate murmured 'The Lord save us!'

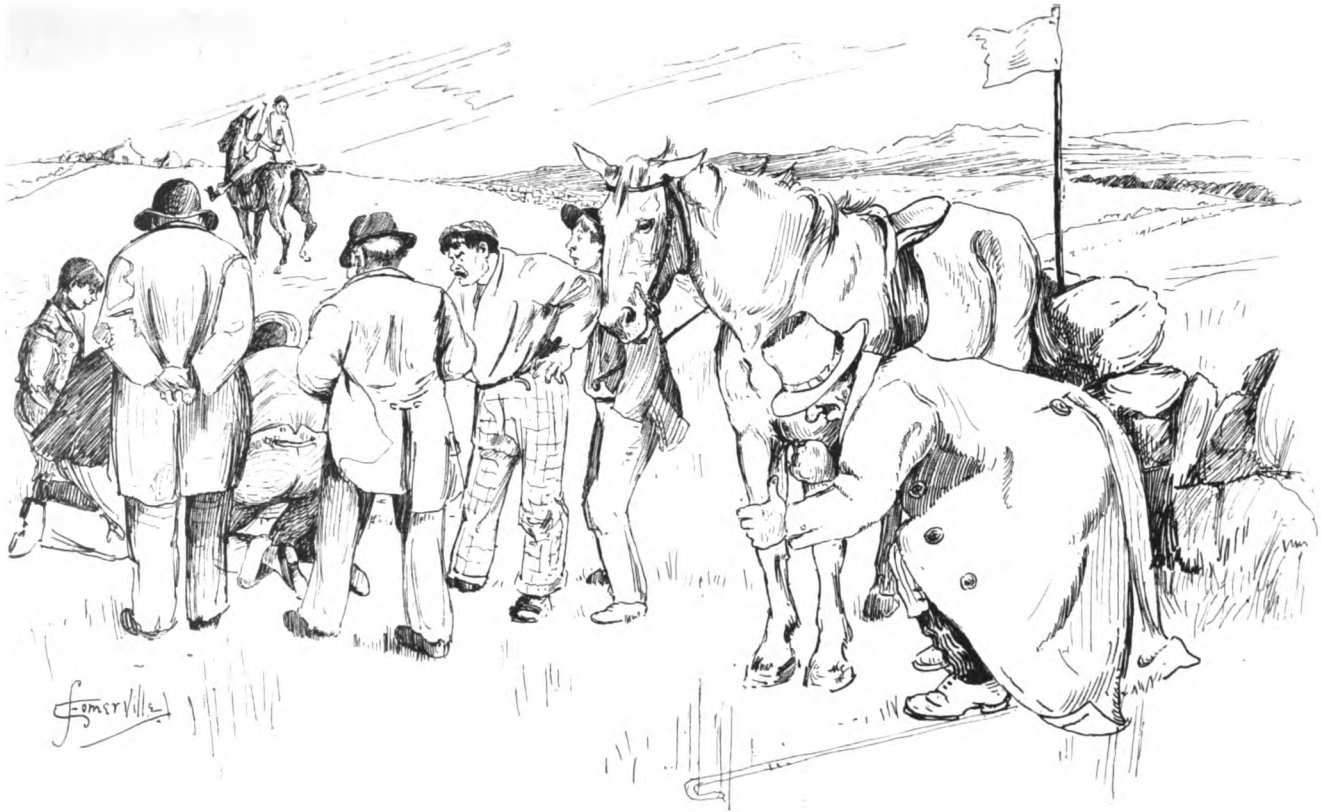
'The blood was dhruv out through his nose and ears,' continued Slipper, with a voice that indicated the cream of the narration, 'and you'd hear his bones crackin' on the ground! You'd have pitied the poor boy.'

'Good heavens!' said Leigh Kelway, sitting up very straight in his chair.

'Was he hurt, Slipper?' asked Flurry casually.

'Hurt is it?' echoed Slipper in high scorn; 'killed on the spot!' He paused to relish the effect of the *dénouement* on Leigh Kelway. 'Oh, divil so pleasant an afthernoon ever you seen; and indeed, Mr. Flurry, it's what we were all sayin', it was a great pity your honour was not there for the likin' you had for Driscoll.'

As he spoke the last word there was an outburst of singing and cheering from a car-load of people who had just pulled up at the door. Flurry listened, leaned back in his chair, and began to laugh.



'YOU'D HAVE PITIED THE POOR BOY'

'It scarcely strikes one as a comic incident,' said Leigh Kelway, very coldly to me; 'in fact, it seems to me that the police ought——'

'Show me Slipper!' bawled a voice in the shop; 'show me that dirty little undherlooper till I have his blood! Hadn't I the race won only for he souring the mare on me! What's that you say? I tell ye he did! He left seven slaps on her with the handle of a hay-rake——'

There was in the room in which we were sitting a second door, leading to the backyard, a door consecrated to the unobtrusive visits of so-called 'Sunday travellers.' Through it Slipper faded away like a dream, and, simultaneously, a tall young man, with a face like a red-hot potato tied up in a bandage, squeezed his way from the shop into the room.

'Well, Driscoll,' said Flurry, 'since it wasn't the teeth of the rake he left on the mare, you needn't be talking!'

Leigh Kelway looked from one to the other with a wilder expression in his eye than I had thought it capable of. I read in it a resolve to abandon Ireland to her fate.

At eight o'clock we were still waiting for the car that we had been assured should be ours directly it returned from the races. At half-past eight we had adopted the only possible course that remained, and had accepted the offers of lifts on the laden cars that were returning to Skebawn, and I presently was gratified by the spectacle of my friend Leigh Kelway wedged between a roulette table and its proprietor on one side of a car, with Driscoll and Slipper, mysteriously reconciled and excessively drunk, seated, locked in each other's arms, on the other. Flurry and I, somewhat similarly placed, followed on two other cars. I was scarcely surprised when I was informed that the melancholy white animal in the shafts of the leading car was Owld Bocock's much-enduring steeplechaser.

The night was very dark and stormy, and it is almost superfluous to say that no one carried lamps; the rain poured upon us, and through wind and wet Owld Bocock's mare set the pace at a rate that showed she knew from bitter experience what was expected from her by gentlemen who had spent the evening in a public-house; behind her the other two tired horses followed closely, incited to emulation by shouting, singing, and a liberal allowance of whip. We were a good ten miles from Skebawn, and never had the road seemed so long. For mile after mile the half-seen low walls slid past us, with occasional plunges into caverns of darkness under trees. Sometimes from a wayside cabin a dog

would dash out to bark at us as we rattled by; sometimes our cavalcade swung aside to pass, with yells and counter-yells, crawling carts filled with other belated race-goers.

I was nearly wet through, even though I received considerable shelter from a Skebawn publican, who slept heavily and irrepressibly on my shoulder. Driscoll, on the leading car, had struck up an approximation to the 'Wearing of the Green,' when a wavering star appeared on the road ahead of us. It grew momently larger; it came towards us apace. Flurry, on the car behind me, shouted suddenly—

'That's the mail car, with one of the lamps out! Tell those fellows ahead to look out!'

But the warning fell on deaf ears.

> 'When laws can change the blades of grass
> From growing as they grow——'

howled five discordant voices, oblivious of the towering proximity of the star.

A Bianconi mail car is double the size of an ordinary outside car, and when on a dark night it advances, Cyclops-like, with but one eye, it is difficult for even a sober driver to calculate its bulk. Above the sounds of melody there arose the thunder of heavy wheels, the splashing trample of three big horses, then a crash and a turmoil of shouts. Our cars pulled up just in time, and I tore myself from the embrace of my publican to go to Leigh Kelway's assistance.

The wing of the Bianconi had caught the wing of the smaller car, flinging Owld Bocock's mare on her side and throwing her freight headlong on top of her, the heap being surmounted by the roulette table. The driver of the mail car unshipped his solitary lamp and turned it on the disaster. I saw that Flurry had already got hold of Leigh Kelway by the heels, and was dragging him from under the others. He struggled up hatless, muddy, and gasping, with Driscoll hanging on by his neck, still singing the 'Wearing of the Green.'

A voice from the mail car said incredulously,'*Leigh Kelway*!' A spectacled face glared down upon him from under the dripping spikes of an umbrella.

It was the Right Honourable the Earl of Wandlebury, Leigh Kelway's chief, returning from his fishing excursion.

Meanwhile Slipper, in the ditch, did not cease to announce that 'Divil so pleasant an afthernoon ever ye seen as what was in it!'

A SHOOTING EXPEDITION IN BALTISTAN

BY LADY WESTMACOTT

AT the end of March 1897, Mr. Ashworth and I left Srinagar, the capital of Cashmere, on a shooting expedition to Baltistan in Lower Thibet. We were very thankful to see the last of Srinagar, after a delay of ten days there, in which we had succeeded in hiring two very dilapidated 80-lb. tents for ourselves, and four still more ragged 'pals' for our native following; and in collecting as few saucepans, plates, cups, knives and forks as we could possibly get along with. Meanwhile life had been made unbearable to us by a crowd of silver-work, papier-mâché work, and wood-carving merchants who besieged our house-boats from morning till night; had we been half sensible we ought to have stopped outside Srinagar and enjoyed some of the finest duck-shooting in the world. But, alas! one buys one's experience—and a great many things besides for which one has no earthly use—the first time, and it is only the next time—that so seldom comes to a person with only an average length of life—that one really knows the right thing to do.

Sixteen kiltas[1] having been produced and paid for, we bought up what we thought we needed in the way of stores from a Parsee merchant in Srinagar, who must have been rather heart-broken to see someone walking off with what had almost become heirlooms in his family—so antiquated they were!—and pro-

[1] A kilta is a wicker basket covered over with leather, and carried by natives on the back.

ceeded to separate the stores and pack them in our kiltas, eight kiltas each being our allowance. Into these we squeezed as many packets of tea, sugar, flour, biscuits and candles as they would hold, filling in the corners with jam, Worcester Sauce, salt, curry powder, spare worsted stockings, putties, handkerchiefs, matches, &c. We each had a trousseau consisting of four flannel shirts made of a light brown cashmere homespun, three pairs of stout 'puttoo' brecches, sewn by the local Tautz, a poshteen, fur cap, felt hat, and a pair of darkened spectacles; a roll of bedding and a waterproof sheet. All these things we accumulated in Srinagar; our rifles and cartridges of course we had brought with us.

We started off wondering what we had forgotten, and whether we had enough of some things, and too much of others; however, I think we found we had been pretty right in most matters, though we did a very short march of about eight miles the first day, in case anything important was missing, to enable us to send back into Srinagar for it.

The spring in Cashmere is very beautiful, and except for the monotony of walking, I know nothing pleasanter than to start marching after a substantial breakfast, drinking in the clear air, with the mountains on either hand, and a stream of ice-cold water ever by your side; passing through picturesque villages nearly hidden in the blossom of their fruit trees. One walks along with not much more weight on one's mind than wondering if your feet are going to stand the marching, whether you will have the luck to get a fresh relay of coolies at the next halt, as you hear Jones is a day's march ahead of you, and hoping that Browne, who started the day after you, won't catch you up. The third day you march twenty-eight miles, and are not quite so sure in the evening that life is so smiling; your bones ache, or at any rate many lazy muscles do, and that grass-shoe[1] has gone very near galling your off heel; the camp is pitched in a ploughed field, and a cold wind whistles on you all night. You have bought a sheep for twice its worth, and a doubt comes in your mind as to the honesty of your shikarri, who really seemed in Srinagar as if he wished you to save money, so hard-working was he in driving away the many leather merchants, gun-makers, and various traffickers, who so nearly persuaded you to buy something. However, resolving to keep your eye on him, you sleep the sleep of the justly tired, and are up and off again next

[1] A shoe made of twisted grass in the form of a sandal, and very comfortable to wear over thick stockings.

morning, without a moment to lose. It would never do to be overtaken by Browne!

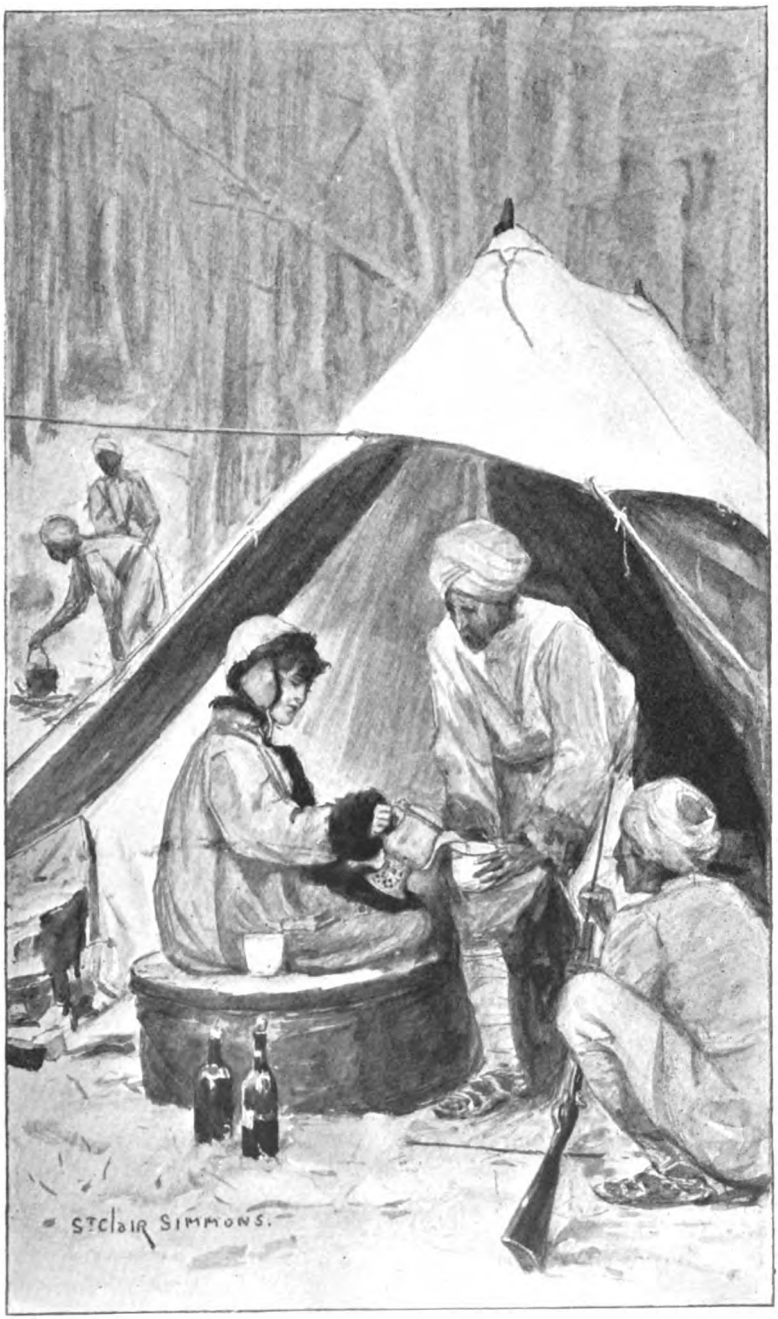
These pleasant marches lasted about a week, as far as I remember (I have no diary with me, though I kept one at the time, so my facts may be a trifle inaccurate about the distances), and then one day we saw some snow—nay, we actually walked on it—lying only in patches at first, but gradually getting thicker and thicker, till at last we were on the snow indeed, and nothing but snow visible on either hand. It seemed so jolly at first to see snow again; but oh! after days of it, I remember our joy at gazing on the green grass once more, and after all the cold and misery we went through, I think we shall never want to see snow any more.

The tents had been taken down at the last camp and rolled up, never to be undone again till we were clear of the snow; and our first experience of a rest-house was not exhilarating, though it was luxury compared to others that we found ourselves sheltering in later. It is hard work tramping through the snow, and I own I was aching all over when we arrived at our destination for the night; our coolies with the luggage were miles behind, and there was nothing for it but to sit down on the damp floor of a very ill-smelling, dark, one-roomed hut, darker because we had to shut the door to keep ourselves warm, with wet worsted stockings and the snow caked on our grass-shoes; however, one of our staff turned up with our posateene, and another with a Cashmeri teapot—which is on the principle of a Russian samovar, with the charcoal in the centre—and we soon had our coats on, and were drinking hot tea, which we found most grateful and comforting.

The next day we started in a snow-storm, after considerable difficulty in getting hold of any coolies to carry the kiltas. We, however, made very heavy work of it, and only marched four miles; the snow underfoot was very soft, and we sank in above the knee at every step; moreover, in spite of having our heads well muffled up and snow-glasses on, the cold had got at our faces, and our eyes and lips had suffered in particular. The lips, indeed, remained caked with blood for nearly a fortnight after, and presented anything but a pleasing appearance. We were only too thankful to take refuge in one of the post-runners' shelters: its roof was nearly on a level with the snow around, and the doorway had been dug out. The walls consisted of rough stones, placed together without any cement, and not reaching within a foot of the roof, the space being filled up with

snow. By the time we and our staff of about eleven Cashmeris and eighteen coolies had all fitted in and lit a fire—the smoke of which filled the room like a dense cloud—we were beginning to wonder if life were worth living, with a long afternoon and night to be got through in that atmosphere.

But with morning came fresh energy, and before we were all under way again two men had already passed us! This would never do; so we hurried on, and heard two other men were behind us! To-day the sun was out, and we had a good march over crisp snow, eventually arriving at a two-roomed rest-house at the foot of the great Zogi La-Pass, the crossing of which looms like a bad nightmare over the Cashmere shikarri's head. Here we spent a busy afternoon, readjusting the loads in the kiltas, cleaning our rifles, and producing the best of our tinned provisions for a feast; for after to-day we should be able to get no firewood till the pass was crossed, unless, indeed, we carried it with us. There was a stove in this rest-house; we all drew our beds up close to it to keep as warm as we could, and after an early dinner we turned in. By 3 A.M. we were all up and off, so much did the Zogi La lie heavy on us, and we might have been seen crawling slowly along by starlight on the snow, one after the other, too sleepy and too cold to utter a word. It is a pretty stiff pull, and almost at once we seemed to be trying to climb up the side of a house, all snow and very slippery; but we hadn't started a minute too soon, for by the time we were on the top the snow was already soft, and the walking became very tiring again, as one went beneath the surface at every step. The four men who had stayed the night with us in the rest-house easily outstripped us, as I walked very badly in the snow, and moreover was suffering from a sore heel, which the strap of my grass-shoe galled unmercifully; consequently we halted at the rest-house on the top of the pass instead of pushing on to the next, a few miles further, as the others did; and anything like the dirt and discomfort of this one it is difficult to describe. No house was visible, as the surface of the snow was a good deal over its roof; but a passage of some feet had been dug through the snow, and down this we crawled on our hands and knees till we got to the end, where we had a drop of a few feet into what was evidently the verandah of the house. Here we found two or three miserable rooms, in which the most humble of cattle might well have objected to lodge. Puddles of frozen filth filled up the uneven floors, on which, *faute de mieux*, we were obliged to sit till our beds arrived. I forgot to mention that we had



TEA IN MY CAMP

started with one camp chair and table apiece from Srinagar, but that they had given in, all four of them, within the first three days, and as we were full of energy, and thought that roughing it was great fun, we had agreed to go on and do without them. We learnt many things before we came back!

That afternoon and night linger in my memory as the most unpleasant time I have ever put in—aching in every joint, freezingly cold, sore eyes and sore lips, icicles hanging on the walls and ceiling, and an odour beyond words arising from the floor as the atmosphere thawed a little; but let me draw a veil—yes, over all those days in the snow, with the grubby little rest-houses at night, and the heavy marching by day—and hurry on to where the snow gradually got less and less, till the earth was only patched with it, or it lay only on the mountains on either hand, and tell you of the joy of marching in the lovely spring weather, with a rushing river to the right of us, and the big bare mountains stretching in apparently endless chains as far as the eye could reach; all the apricot, apple, and other fruit-trees in full bloom, and little villages hidden away in bends of the road every few miles.

The hillside's dew-pearled,
The lark's on the wing,
God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world.

After the snow Mr. Ashworth left me, hurrying on in double marches to secure a good nullah, and I followed on with my shikarri and staff of coolies, doing a march a day, which was all I could manage. I met with nothing but politeness and good-nature from all the natives, and feel sure any lady could travel there all alone with the same results.

After a march of about 280 miles from Srinagar, which took me about nineteen days, I found myself in the Shygar valley with only two or three vacant nullahs to choose from. My shikarri recommended me to pitch my camp in the Neali nullah, which I did, at the foot of what seemed to me a very bleak, barren mountain, more than half covered with snow, and not much grazing ground visible to my ignorant eyes; however, the shikarri wandered out with a telescope, whilst I arranged the camp, and reported ibex both numerous and big.

Arranging the camp didn't take me long. There was only my own 80-lb. tent to pitch, and one 'pal' for the servants, with another more dilapidated 'pal' still that served as a kitchen. The kiltas were stowed away under the flies of my tent, and my

camp-bed, bath, and a string to hang my clothes on, composed my household goods. No looking-glass, no chair, no table! but a lovely climate, the prospect of sport, and fruit-trees in blossom all round my tent, made one feel that there was not much to complain about. Happy moment when I decided to bring some books with me, for now, alas! I got fever, and was laid up for nearly six weeks, and if it had not been for my books when I was getting better, I should have felt a bit bored. I heard of two or three men who were shooting in the Shygar valley that year going down with fever, and I cannot think why. The camping-grounds were high and dry; the water came straight down from the mountains, and the climate seemed everything that was perfect; perhaps the sudden change to a severe cold climate does not agree with an Indian liver! I can account for it in no other way.

It was nearly the end of May before I was strong enough to begin shooting; and the snow was off nearly all the lower part of my nullah when I got my first ibex. I had not been idle during my convalescence, and had been taught by the shikarri which were the likely places to look for the game, and what their habits were, &c. My first ibex I got only at a distance of about 300 yards. It was a running shot. I am ashamed to say I only wounded the poor beast in the hind quarter, and he travelled some way before he died. When his head was brought in he measured 40½ inches, and had good thick horns.

Pleasant as it is to go over each individual stalk in one's mind, I will not bore the reader with any more details of my shooting. My total bag till the middle of July was nine ibex and one maikhor. It is not a maikhor country, and I only got a bad specimen out of a small herd, that for some peculiar reason seemed to come from a long distance to eat some particular grass of their fancy in the Neali nullah. I believe there are no maikhor in any of the other nullahs of the Shygar valley. During all this time, though the weather allowed of my being out most days, I only saw ibex eight times--anywhere, I mean, so as to be able to get a shot. Three of my nine I killed on the same day out of one herd, two on another day out of the same herd, the rest on separate days; and then there are two hideous days on which I have to confess to missing easy shots! So counting the maikhor I only had nine chances of shooting during all the weeks I was up there, and had worked hard for them, too!

By the middle of June, I moved my camp halfway up the hill, leaving the coolie who was honoured by the name of cook

at the foot, whence he sent up supplies two or three times a week as the spirit moved him. The supplies consisted of lumps of cold mutton, cold fowl, hard-boiled eggs, chupatties, and mulberries. A little water from a stream washed down these delicacies, and tobacco put an aggrieved digestion in a better frame of mind after it all.

The climbing is very stiff in places, and to stalk on one side of a ravine—with the ibex feeding in full view on the other, and the little 'mahdines' keeping a good look-out, while their lords feed—takes a good bit of doing, especially if you have to crawl on your hands and knees over snow and slush, and débris of avalanches, knowing any moment one of the 'mahdines' may give a whistle, when off the whole herd will go, and you will be left to make the most of a long walk back to camp. I used generally to be out by four or five in the morning, making for the ground, get my shot, or not, as the case might be, home till the afternoon if I did get a shot—if not, breakfast on the hillside about ten, and then all the day to sleep or read till about three. Then the shikarri comes to life again, the ibex reappear to feed, and you try your luck once more in the evening. How much more happily I used to sit on the ground and eat my dinner, and then turn in to that very hard camp bed, when a head had been measured and discussed, then skinned and cleaned, and added to the little heap! Sometimes the shikarri and I would take our blankets, go to some more distant point, and sleep under a rock, so as to enable one to be early the next morning on some ground that the shikarri particularly fancied. I remember spending three days like this with my head under a rock, and my feet under a waterproof, with a thick mist covering everything, varied with rain, sleet, and genuine snow. At the end of three days the shikarri had lost all heart for ibex, and declining even to attempt to look for any, we all trailed sorrowfully home to camp, soaked through and through. Some hot tea and a 'buck' with his friends generally restore the most faint-hearted Cashmeri, and he will be dry and smiling and keen again by next day.

In the middle of July, when the snow was only lying on the very extreme top of Neali, I said good-bye to my nullah with many regrets, and went for a two days' march, by way of holiday, to a little village nearly at the end of the Shygar Valley. Here there are some hot springs, part of which are paled in for rajahs and 'sahib-log' to bathe in. The natives here said they had never seen a 'mem sahib,' so I was examined by them with

great curiosity, and they were with difficulty kept off from seeing the 'altogether' over the palings! The temperature of these springs is 108° Fahrenheit, and the water must have some medicinal properties, as one came out of it with a delightfully balmy, soothed feeling.

I had previously written to the authorities at Srinagar to ask for leave to cross the Deosi plateau, which I heard was closed to Europeans on account of the danger in crossing it, as it is very desolate, nearly always covered with snow, and crossed by many swollen streams. Leave, however, was refused me, so the obvious thing to do was to go without. Accordingly I left my hot springs, and went down the river on a raft to Skardu, the capital town of Baltistan. The raft was composed of strips of bamboo, or some cane, laid over inflated sheep-bladders. As the river was very swift, and the bladders continually bursting, we had rather a perilous voyage, and were as wet as if we had swum. Mr. Ashworth joined me in Skardu early in August, and we stayed a few days there hiring ponies to carry our kit, over-eating ourselves on green apples, and comparing notes on our shooting. He had shot ten ibex, and had several good heads, one of forty-seven inches.

The Deosi plateau was well worth seeing, and I am glad that we flew in the face of authority for once, and saw it. The result of having no pass to cross it was that we should get no supplies on the Gilgit road when we had crossed the plateau, so we drove our dinners with us in the form of three sheep, to whom, by the way, I grew very much attached, as they marched with us in such a companionable manner, and got quite tame! We crossed the highest pass on the Deosi that we had met with on our travels. I forget its name, but it was 15,900 feet, and we had snow again to remind us of our former miseries. They say the Deosi is only free from snow for two months of the year. Nature certainly makes the most of these two months, for after we had crossed the pass and descended on to the plateau on the other side, there were quantities of lovely wild flowers, brilliant blue and yellow and red, and it seemed hardly worth their while to be growing so profusely when one knew that in another month, by September, they would all be covered with snow again. I picked some edelweiss and gentian, meaning to send them home in an envelope to England, which intention resulted in a paving-stone for somewhere else.

At the end of the first day's march, just as we were pitching camp, the shikarri spotted a bear about half a mile off, fishing

in a stream below us. Turning the telescope on him we found he was a fair-sized brown bear, but with rather a mangy coat; however, Mr. Ashworth started off to stalk him, and I watched the fun from the camp. The bear began travelling before he could possibly have winded anything, occasionally stopping to fish for a few minutes, but so far ahead of his pursuer that he could never have got near; moreover, darkness was setting in, and nothing more was to be made of him. There were some very swollen rivers to cross on the Deosi; it was as much as we could do to get the ponies with our kit over several of them, and the water was uncommonly icy and deep to wade through; however, it is marvellous what you can do when you know you can't turn back!

I—through some devilment of my agent in Srinagar, who had forwarded me some ammunition to the wrong place—was left with only two cartridges, and had completely put all hope of getting a bear out of my head. Mr. Ashworth started next day with a very sharp go of fever, so we sauntered along, I occasionally taking a pot at a marmot with a ·380 rifle, and my shikarri carrying my ·450 single barrel (an old weapon with which I had done all my shooting) slung over his back. After marching about five miles we sat down to breakfast near a large lake, upon which we had suddenly come. It was a very attractive scene in a bleak way, not a tree being visible, only a large body of cold, icy-looking water, bounded on the north side with snow-hills; but on the south side we were sitting on green grass. Mr. Ashworth was lying almost asleep, and I was smoking after breakfasting, when I suddenly spotted what I took to be three bears on the farther side of the lake, down on the brink. I called my shikarri, who laughed when I pointed them out to him, and said they were cattle. I asked him if he had ever seen cattle move like that, with the peculiar slow slouch of a bear; but as we had no telescope with us he laughed again, and stuck to the cattle theory. Mr. Ashworth was roused by this time, and agreeing with me that they were bear, was for sending back my shikarri, who was the only person with us, to fetch his rifle, which was behind with the kit, and which, to the best of our belief, hadn't even started as yet.

And here I come to a not very brilliant story in the annals of sport; but as it may serve to point a moral on the errors of a woman shooting, I will be unselfish enough to give it. I wouldn't hear of any delay—the bears might move off any second. I had never seen a bear out of a menagerie before—there were

some convenient rocks near them—had I not two cartridges?—mightn't they with great, great luck account for two bears? Worth trying, at any rate! So I reasoned, or unreasoned. Anyhow, in my selfishness off I started, seizing my rifle, and followed most reluctantly by my unhappy shikarri. Mr. Ashworth, seeing argument was useless with a woman, followed at a distance with my ·380, more because he did not like to sit still and let me go alone with only two cartridges than with the idea of being of any help.

Well, we did a fairly long stalk round two sides of the lake, and reached the rocks. Meanwhile one bear had disappeared and the other two had moved from the lake to a stream that ran into the lake, and were fishing and enjoying themselves hugely some way below us. One proved to be a very fine she-bear, with a good coat; the other was a nearly full-grown cub. Whenever the cub caught a fish, the mother growled and gave him a cuff over the head, whether as a token of endearment or the reverse I have never been able to decide. We lay low in the rocks and watched them for a bit, as long as I could possess my soul in patience, and then, though the range was pretty long, it was decided that I should let drive; so, taking a steady aim, I fired at the old lady, who rolled over for a second, and then picking herself up, and quite unsettling our minds as to whether she was hit or not, up they both came straight to where we were hidden, thus spoiling all my nice theories about bears always going down hill after being shot at! I remember pausing to laugh at the agonised expression of Mr. Ashworth and the shikarri, which was a little unkind of me considering they were quite at the mercy of my last cartridge—and then it was time to fire again. She was only about forty yards off when I took my last aim, and the next thing we saw, she was lying in a heap quite motionless, and the cub was doing the best time on record to a hill above the rocks we were hiding in. We waited a second, and I remember Mr. Ashworth calling out, 'Good shot!' and the shikarri looking a changed being. Then we all got up and went towards where she was lying; but alas for what a story ought to be, and what it is! Just as we were almost near enough to her to pat her, up she got as if nothing had happened, and started up the hill again ahead of us, with nothing but a ·380 to save the situation, *and* the bear! Mr. Ashworth put a ·380 bullet in her bustle as she hurried off by way of relieving his feelings, when lo! another change in the scene, which proves that even a brown bear will turn when sufficiently fired upon. She was now charging down-

TEN YARDS ABOVE US, COMING WITH A ROAR

hill on to us! There we were, open-mouthed, in a row waiting for her, and she on her hind legs, open-mouthed too, ten yards above us, coming with a roar! I have no opinion of a Cashmeri's courage, but here let me add that my shikarri, though having the misfortune to be a Cashmeri and an arrant coward on several previous occasions, stuck to it like a man this time. He was carrying a light bamboo that I generally walked with, and just as Mr. Ashworth was preparing to do the job with another tickle from the ·380, the shikarri flourished the stick in the bear's face; the Fates intervened, the bear turned round with a tremendous growl and hurried up hill again, going indecently fast, too, and putting my last shot at her to worse and worse shame. How I followed her over snow for miles armed with my knife, which would have been of as much use had I come up to her as the 'p' in pneumatic, and lost her in some rocks, is the silly ending to a very disgraceful exhibition; but as every man will be able to say, what do you expect of a woman who goes shooting? I feel I have offered myself up for them in a sacrificial manner, as a horrible example to warn off all wives, sisters, cousins, and aunts from leaving their needlework and interfering in the pursuits of the sterner sex.

But I enjoyed Baltistan enormously for all that, and it was very sad to leave the Deosi, and get on to the Gilgit road, with just sufficient chance of meeting a white face at any moment to oblige me to put on my skirt once again, wash my face, and feel horribly civilised. A little bitter after having felt the delight of sometimes never washing even my face for ten days at a time! I had no idea how large a degree of dirt and content could go together, which broke down another theory; and now I am left with very few, but perhaps sounder ones.

ON EXTEMPORISED SLEIGHS

BY FRANCES J. ERSKINE

As a nation we are decidedly backward in enjoying a heavy fall of snow, when that blessing happens to come to us. We slip and slide, stagger and growl; yet it is only towards the end of the cold snap that the cheery sound of sleigh-bells rings over the roads, and ere the hastily made makeshifts have been fully appreciated the thaw sets in, and we are left with one more object-lesson, if we care to look at it, of the unreadiness of the English race.

Why, in the name of common-sense, we do not all keep ready a full set of runners as a part of the stable equipment, to supersede the wheels when the snow comes down, is a question it would be hard to answer satisfactorily. It would save the horses many a weary tug; and a heavily laden cart ploughing through deep snow is a sight to make any lover of horses weep. Also, if runners were the rule instead of the exception, the roads even with a light fall—two or three inches—would soon get in perfect level order, instead of the regulation two ruts and a hoof-track, which require all carts either to be the same gauge, or run the risk of having a spill in the pair of mammoth tramlines.

But the farmers are a slow race to move. What did for their fathers does for them, unless a very strong initiative is given in the direction of progress; and for sturdy unbelief in 'those sledge things' an average coachman will take a lot of beating.

If one of this super-conservative tribe is told that the horses will be tried in a sleigh, it is curious to mark the expression of sulky contempt which spreads all over his face. Subterranean grumblings—'Pulling the 'orses to pieces!' 'Orrid things!' and so on—take the place of brisk alertness, and if anyone wants an expression of sulky misery mixed with abject fear, all that is needed is to take a snapshot of a typical British coachman on his first ride in a sleigh. If the runners have been carefully oiled

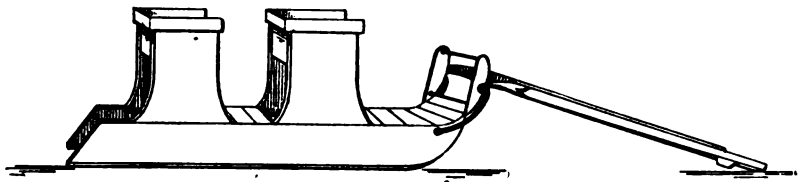
and filed beforehand, so as to avoid jarring patches of rust, the smooth movement soon makes a rapid conversion. The comedy of the whole thing is, that horses and ponies take to sleighing like the proverbial ducks to water. Young horses, old horses, cantankerous ponies, all seem most happily to appreciate the smooth gliding movement and the music of the sleigh-bells. They appear to revel as much as the driver does in the dive into a fresh creamy drift, when the snow powder parts with a murmuring hiss, as the runners cut smoothly through.

A HOME-MADE SLEIGH

One of the first results of a ride on an extemporised sleigh is the alacrity of others to imitate. All and sundry beg for a ride. They call themselves uncomplimentary things for not having started one of their own, and the local blacksmiths are overwhelmed with orders. These worthies have about as much idea of the fine art of sleigh-building as a bull-frog has of Wagner, and some of their contrivances are fearful things to behold, as well as solid to the last degree. Of whatever rank of life an orthodox Briton may be, solidity enters in; and some of the iron-runner

sleighs would take a team to pull them. Far more successful, if less ornamental, are those of wood of the Swiss and Canadian pattern. The high-perched ones look smarter, but, especially on rutty roads, are more apt to capsize.

The first extemporised sleigh I ever was in was the work of a Lincolnshire village carpenter, and was turned out complete,



NO. 1.—À LA CANADIAN LUMBER SLEIGH

barring the paint and the finish, in twenty-four hours. It was on the model of a Canadian lumber sleigh, with two prim, hard, and uncomfortable little seats, one behind the other. When furnished with fur rugs and wraps it was not so very hard, and as soon as the runners got worn a bit it slipped over the frozen snow quite gaily. Then a thaw came, and it was beautified with sundry coats of cherry-red enamel, which was just surface dry before more snow came down and the 'Geranium' went into commission again.

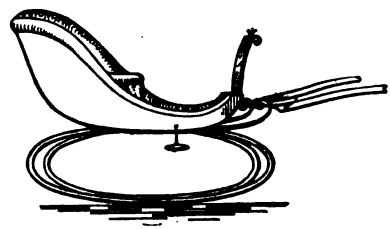
NO. 2.—À LA GARDEN SEAT

At first we had slight qualms as to whether it was quite safe, and one day our splinter-bar gave way—luckily, as it happened, near a convenient blacksmith, who hinged the shafts on short, fat bolts which have held to this day. But afterwards part of the sleigh equipment was a screw wrench, duplicate bolts, and last, but not least, a serviceable coil of rope.

NO. 3.—A CRADLE ON RUNNERS

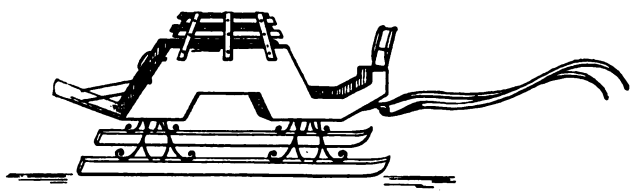
During a move the demon of destructiveness, in the shape of furniture men, caused the sleigh to be taken to pieces, for convenience of transit, and, the bits being handy, one day were cut up for firewood, all except the runners. These stood in an outhouse,

neglected, save that the iron was given a coat of vaseline, till more snow came two years after. An old dog-cart body was then found, and the runners attached by a dozen tenpenny nails, forming a lowly vehicle certainly, but one which ran for years better than many at ten times the cost. The runners are worn down now to less than the eighth of an inch, and have to be replaced by fresh ones. It is the need of refitting and predictions of a hard winter which have made my thoughts turn to the capital rides I have had in days past, and I set them down so that others may also try how lovely sleighing is on English roads. It does not look much like snow at present; as I write, there is a howling gale blowing from the south. Some battered red and white roses are tossing about, wet and torn, above a mass of dead leaves; yet it may be that later on the snow will fall, and the sleigh-bells will once more clash out on the frosty Fenland air.



NO. 4.—A LOCAL CARRIAGE-BUILDER'S IDEA OF WHAT IS WANTED

There are some who sit at home and shiver when the snow is covering the land. There are others who rush up into the fog and grime of town whilst horses are left in their stables, and never guess what sport they are missing. Very few things are more splendid and exciting than the smooth glide of the runners, the purring of the snow as it rushes on each side, the rise and fall of a cross-country bit, and over all the brilliant sun, the rime



NO. 5.—DOG-CART BODY ON RUNNERS

frost on every twig, and the marvellous blue sky which comes with a cold snap of weather. Those who have not experienced a moonlight sleigh ride have a most delicious sensation in store. Several come to my mind as I write. There was one when we drove home from skating in 1895. Sunset was just dying out in the west in colours I cannot describe, so perfect was the harmony

of crimson, yellow, and a deep purple blue, all fused in one opaline mixture. There was a big full moon rising over the tree-tops behind, and the stars glittered through the intensely cold air like diamonds. The cold was extreme. Even herons were found half frozen on the low ground near the river, one choked by trying to eat a stiff frozen fish; dead birds were picked up by dozens; the foam on the horses' bits was frozen into icicles, and even heavy fur gloves did not quite keep the hands warm. Yet the quick gliding motion and the clash of bells through the air completed a most perfect piece of enjoyment.

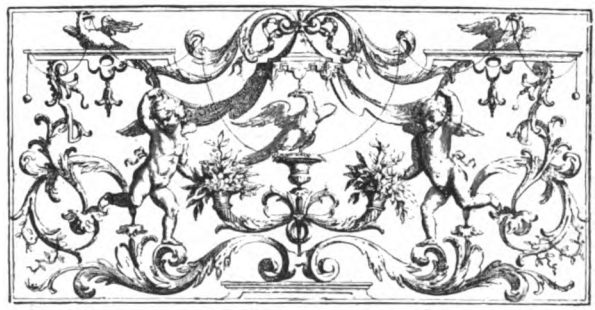
Then there was another, about Christmas 1891, if I remember rightly. We had been very busy decorating for Christmas, and found it sweetly restful to fly along in the sleigh under the frosty moon, whilst every now and then a string of wild-duck would rise flapping from the riverside, scared by the clash of the bells. Our way lay uphill and down over roads which had not been beaten down, and there was a wonderful feeling of exhilaration in the movement as we cut through and slid over the white drifts, whilst the powdered snow sparkled in the moonbeams.

It was good fun also, in 1894, when a contested election was being fought out in the neighbourhood. It was January, and almost every road in the Southwolds was more or less drifted up. One day we ran down to see how events were going on, and heard that agents, canvassers, candidate, and supporters had more or less come to grief in the drifts, and in some cases had to wait, patiently or otherwise, till they were dug out. It was a grim enough comedy for those snowed up, but it had a distinctly humorous side. The drifts were really tremendous—twenty feet in some places—and sleighing through them after the road was cut seemed like the experiences of some pigmies who had burrowed into a mammoth Twelfth cake.

It has been said before that the makeshifts of country smiths, carpenters, and carriage-builders are comical. The illustrations show a few of the varied types, hung together in a hurry. The bob-sleigh type is most common, next comes a further straining after elegance in the garden-seat pattern. This is somewhat draughty, to put it mildly. Another sketch is of one which was dubbed at the time a 'cradle on runners.' It resembled a mammoth shoe perched on widely diverging struts of iron, which held the runners to the body, a pair of rigid pole shafts completed the edifice. With a big raking horse, the 'cradle' proved a wonder to go on the frozen roads. Then comes two recollections of local carriage-builders as they rose to the crisis. One was

simply a chaise body bolted to two huge bows of thick iron; another was a lovely confection, as the dressmakers put it, of cast-iron foliated design, surmounted by two garden seats of equally chaste description. The fact of all this iron decoration entailing extra weight never entered into the stupid head of the well-meaning architect; presumably, had he been in the shafts, his views would have been widely different.

As a matter of fact, though there are a few years when sleighing is not possible, it is by no means a rarity to have the roads in condition for three or four weeks. When this happens, time is wasted compiling anything possible on runners, and this might be obviated by keeping a set of runners in reserve. If these few notes lead more people to enjoy driving on runners, they will not have been written in vain.



WANJEE

BY L. H. DE VISME SHAW

HER godmother was a chutney-bottle.

During luncheon, someone asked what I intended to call her. I had not considered the question ; it was quite immaterial to me, and I said so.

After various suggestions, all of which failed to meet with general approval, my youngest sister's eye chanced to fall upon the chutney-bottle. It bore the makers' names, Merwanjee, Poonjiajee & Co.

'Merwanjee!' she cried.

The name was voted pretty, but too long, so they agreed to drop the first syllable.

The first time I ever saw Wanjee she was on her back, her legs waving wildly in the air. She had slipped on the greasy flagstones and rolled completely over. Plunging, snorting, struggling, she at last regained her feet, and made a mad dash for the opposite side of the market-place, the man at the other end of the rope bobbing about after the wont of a tin pot when tied to the tail of some terrified yelping cur. But Wanjee was nothing if not erratic. Before she had gone fifteen yards, she reared and swerved, and then dashed away in a new direction, describing a segment of a circle, of which the owner was the centre.

When you see a taut rope bearing down upon you at the rate of twenty miles an hour, you can do one of two things : you can either throw yourself flat on the ground, or you can jump. If you don't jump high enough, you catch your feet in the rope. I did not jump high enough. A sympathiser brought me my hat, the umbrella I never saw again.

I DID NOT JUMP HIGH ENOUGH

One of the crowd wished me better luck next time.

'Will you buy her, gov'nor?' said the owner as he came up to me.

Wanjee in the meantime, the rope being released, had plunged into the midst of her fellows, a surging drove of wild Welsh ponies, who, but a few days before, had been ranging the mountain slopes of their native land.

'How much?'

'Thirty pounds is the dead lowest, the blooming dead lowest I'll take for that 'ere pony. There aint a one in all Glamorganshire can touch her. If anybody in this here market was to offer me twenty-nine pound ten, I'd tell him to put the money back in his pocket, an' sharp, too. The price is thirty pound to you, sir, seeing she knocked you down. Will you buy her?'

'No.'

'If she don't make the fastest thing in this here United Hempire, I'll eat my blooming hat. You've seen what she's made of.'

'Yes,' I answered, 'and felt.'

He drew me aside, and spoke confidentially. 'You'd better buy that 'ere pony, sir,' he said in a hoarse whisper. 'If you live to be a hundred, you won't come across the likes at the price again.'

I told him, firstly, that I did not happen to want a pony; and, secondly, that if I did, I should not give thirty pounds for one. And then I wished him good morning. But he barred my passage as I turned to go.

'If you won't give thirty, what'll you give?'

'Five pounds.'

His manner changed abruptly. 'You shall have her for ten, sir. Of course, you'll understand I didn't know who you was, first off. Not a shilling less than ten pounds will I take for her. Four year old an' sound. I won't take a blooming shilling under ten pounds, not if I never move off this blooming ground again.'

When I had raised my own price to six pounds, and the dealer had lowered his to seven, he allowed me to leave the market without further hindrance. Apparently seven pounds was really the lowest sum he would take. As I walked I mused. Wanjee had forced the fact of her existence upon me in a manner not to be soon forgotten. Besides this, she interested me. I felt drawn towards her; I felt that I should like to take her home, and study her at my ease; and, although an unbroken Welsh pony was perhaps, of all other things in the world, the

thing I least wanted, I found myself beginning to regret that I had not given the man his seven pounds. I hesitated. Should I go back and buy her?

At the moment of asking myself the question, a hand was laid upon my shoulder from behind. I turned. It was the dealer. He had followed me till there seemed to him no hope that I should change my mind.

For six pounds and half a crown Wanjee became my own. A man I knew, who happened to be in the market, undertook to bring her home—a distance of nine miles—for five shillings.

By four o'clock that afternoon everything was ready for her reception. The boy, acting under my orders, hurdled off the hovel on one side of the yard, and drove the two sows inside the enclosure. Then I sent him to borrow a truss of hay, which, together with a pail of water, was placed in a corner of the opposite hovel. I saw a bed of straw properly shaken down. After this, I went in to tea.

At six o'clock I began to wonder; from seven to eight, I was wondering still more; at nine, I was feverish and restless; at ten anxiety had thrust every feeling from my mind; at eleven the boy came to the house and asked if he might go to bed, and was told to do so; at twelve I swore a little—only just a very little; at a quarter-past one I turned in, disgusted with life and all appertaining thereto.

Two hours later I was roused by the boisterous barking of the dogs. I jumped out of bed and threw up the window. The outlines of a pony and man could be dimly discerned.

The man was disrespectful; his talk vehement and rambling. It was something about an old woman having been knocked over and killed, and about his having been detained at the police station pending inquiries. After this, as far as I could understand, two more old women had met with a like fate, occurrences which entailed further visits to the superintendent. It appeared that the first old woman tried to jump the rope. Among minor incidents, Wanjee had, so I was told, rushed through the open door of a public-house and taken possession of the bar, whence she was only ejected under the mild persuasion of a red-hot poker. The man was describing how she swam across the river, and then swam back again, and how he, having fastened the rope round his waist, had no course open but to follow her, when I cut him short. I told him to put the pony in the yard, and to be sure that the gate was properly fastened after her, and then I shut the window, and went back between the sheets.

It was the boy who gave the alarm the next morning. At a quarter-past six I bounded out of bed and hurried off to the yard. The report was, alas! too true.

I could never quite understand how Wanjee managed to kill those two sows. When I entered the yard, she was standing inside the hurdled enclosure, with her fore feet on one corpse and her hind feet on the other. Her look was revengeful and wild. I did not venture very near.

This was the Sunday morning. At luncheon Wanjee received her name. On the Monday, Jack, my brother, came home. I was peering mournfully through the yard gate when he made his appearance.

'What?—an unbroken pony? Oh, *I'll* break her for you. I know all about horse-breaking—studied the thing heaps of times. All you have to do is to be gentle, perfectly gentle. Let's have a look at her points. Hullo!—where are the pigs?'

'There.' I pointed towards the hurdles, through which the bodies of the two sows were just visible. Jack was about to open the gate when I seized his hand.

'Listen!'—I spoke slowly and impressively. 'Since that pony was bought on Saturday, she has killed three women and two pigs. She nearly killed the boy as well. When he was moving a hurdle yesterday, with the intention of turning her out of the enclosure, she crashed through the other hurdles and came for him like a raging lion. He reached the gate just in time, and managed to slam it behind him. And then he fainted. When ordered this morning to go into the yard and bring out the pail, he gave notice on the spot. He said his life was worth more to him than seven shillings a week.'

Jack smiled a compassionate sort of smile.

'The boy wasn't gentle with her, you see. One *must* be gentle when dealing with unbroken horses. I'll just show you how it's done. What's her name?'

'Wanjee.'

Jack opened the gate. I saw that any further warning would be useless. He strolled deliberately up to the hurdles, and stood for some moments gazing upon those battered corpses which lay half buried in their bed of straw. Then he turned his attention towards Wanjee. She was standing in the opposite corner, idly picking over what remained of her hay. Apparently she was wholly dead to the fact of Jack's proximity.

'Wanjee, Wanjee!' He had advanced to within eight or ten feet of her, and stood holding out his hand. I was ready to fling the

gate open at a moment's notice; my heart was beating like a kettledrum.

'Wanjee, Wanjee—poor little Wanjee!'

Wanjee looked round in a languid manner, and then turned slowly and faced Jack. Jack stood motionless. I was more than surprised at the pony's conduct; I began to think that Jack really knew exactly the way in which an unbroken horse should be treated, though how he could have picked up the knowledge was a mystery to me. He had, it is true, been in the habit of riding Brighton donkeys some twenty years before, while I once saw him driving a hansom (with the cabby inside); but this limited experience could scarcely be taken to imply the possession of any very great practical acquaintance with equine things and ways. Indeed, I had always considered myself possessed of a wider and in every way a sounder knowledge of horseflesh than he.

Jack advanced a couple of feet nearer, still holding out his hand. Wanjee, Wanjee—poor little Wan——'

You know how oddly things seem to take place in a dream. For those few brief moments I felt exactly as though I were dreaming. I saw Wanjee's body shoot forward like a rocket. I saw Jack flash across the yard like a streak of greased lightning. I saw Wanjee, her mouth wide open, in hot pursuit. I saw Jack leap the hurdles. I saw him, with what seemed superhuman agility, scramble on to the top of the old iron cistern and disappear under the roof, where one of the cross beams afforded him a resting-place. I saw Wanjee rear upwards and snap savagely at his feet, but she was just a moment too late.

At this point a mist came before my eyes. When next I looked towards the scene of action—this sounds almost like fiction—I saw Wanjee sitting on her haunches, gazing upwards with a longing air—just as in pictures you see the fox eyeing the grapes above his head. She was sitting on one of the pigs.

'Hi!'

'What?'

'Come in and drag that brute away.'

I declined.

'She won't hurt you.'

A second time I felt myself constrained to decline. Then came Jack's voice again.

'What the dickens shall I do?'

'Come down,' I said; 'come down and be gentle with her—perfectly gentle.'

SHE WAS SITTING ON ONE OF THE PIGS

The boy, who was working in the garden, utterly refused to venture anywhere near the yard, so I was obliged to bring the ladder myself. When I had dislodged sufficient tiles, Jack crawled through the roof.

The bargain I made with Jack was, that he should be allowed three months in which to do exactly as he liked with Wanjee; that if by the end of that period he had succeeded in breaking her, he was to have all she fetched over ten pounds, and that in the meantime I was to pay for her keep. I insisted upon one condition, viz. that the yard gate should always be kept padlocked, except when he wished to go in and out. I had an idea that Wanjee might possibly discover some means of undoing the catch; the thought of suddenly meeting her face to face was not a pleasant one.

Jack started business at once. In half an hour's time he had provided himself with a stout rope, a ball of twine, and a long clothes-prop.

'I'm going to get the pigs out of the way to begin with,' he said. 'After that, I shall noose the pony. When once you've got a rope round a horse's neck, and he finds he can't get away, he gives in at once. The great thing is to make him understand that you're his master. All the rest is mere child's play.'

Jack made his way back through the roof, and resumed his perch on the beam. In less than four hours he managed, by means of the clothes-prop, to pass a noose over the body of one of the pigs. When this feat had been performed, he tied the twine to the end of the rope, and a stone to the end of the twine, and, after some hundred and fifty ineffectual attempts, succeeded at length in throwing the stone to within a few feet of the yard gate. On coming round to the gate, he drew in first the twine and then the rope, and then—aided by myself—the sow. Wanjee was busy with her remnants of hay. She took no notice while the gate was opened and the sow dragged through.

There yet remained upwards of half an hour's daylight when the second corpse was drawn through the gate. After this, Jack took the clothes-prop and knocked down the three hurdles which were still standing. He concluded his day's labours by lowering a pail of water from the roof and flinging down an armful of hay.

Directly after breakfast the following morning Jack began his arrangements for noosing the pony. His plans were not altogether devoid of ingenuity. First of all he lashed the clothes-prop to the beam in such a position that a plumb-line lowered through the fork would touch earth about three feet from the angle formed by

the cistern and the wall. Next he formed a noose at the end of the rope, so knotted that it could not pull tight enough to strangle Wanjee during the struggles for freedom which she would undoubtedly make on feeling the rope round her neck. When he had stiffened the noose by an arrangement of copper wire—rather a clever idea, so he told me—he lowered it gently through the fork. The success of his plan seemed assured; a horse could not reach food in the corner without putting its head through the noose, and then a sudden jerk from above would pull the slipknot tight. He brought the other end of the rope through the roof, and tied it to the trunk of an elm-tree near at hand.

I took a keen interest in these proceedings. And so did Wanjee. All the time she had been sitting on her haunches just outside the hovel. It seemed natural to Wanjee to sit down whenever there was nothing particular to do. I never noticed this peculiarity in a pony before; I have never noticed it since.

Jack dropped a small bunch of hay in the corner, and then came round to the gate where I was standing. Wanjee slowly assumed a standing posture. After bestowing a careless glance upon Jack and myself, she strolled leisurely up to the corner, put her head through the noose, and began to eat the hay.

Jack waxed ecstatical. His ecstasy over, he dwelt for a time upon the vast hiatus which divides human intelligence from that of the lower animals. After this he descended to the commonplace and practical.

'I'm just going to the house for some sherry and a biscuit,' he said, 'and then I shall come straight back and noose her. She'll be a different pony by this time to-morrow; I shan't trouble about looking up the cart and harness and things till next week. All horse-breaking books say it's best to get the animal thoroughly gentled before you put it in harness.'

When Jack came back he dropped another handful of hay into the corner, and then, with the rope in his hands, lay flat on the roof, so that he could just see the noose and the hay. I resumed my station at the gate. Jack had scarcely had time to arrange himself comfortably when Wanjee walked up to the noose. She looked at the hay; she looked at the hole in the roof; then she looked round at myself; and then she sat down.

When I went in to luncheon about two hours later she was still sitting there.

On returning from luncheon Jack stole silently up the ladder and peeped through the hole. The hay was gone. After dropping another handful into the corner he once again stretched himself

upon the roof. Wanjee seated herself on the spot she had occupied during the morning. She seemed quite happy.

Not till it was almost dark did Jack's patience become exhausted. When he had lowered a pail of fresh water and dropped Wanjee's supper, a large bunch of hay, into the corner he came and joined me at the gate. No sooner did Wanjee catch sight of him than she yawned a languid kind of yawn, rose to her feet, and went straight over to the corner; she put her head through the noose and took a large mouthful of hay, with which she walked across to the opposite hovel. Jack, thinking she would return at once for another mouthful, slipped like lightning round the corner, and silently regained the roof. But he might just as well have saved himself the trouble. When Wanjee had finished her mouthful she stretched herself out at full length upon the straw, closed her eyes, and giving one deep-drawn sigh settled into what looked like slumber of the happiest and most dreamless kind.

Jack spent the greater part of the next fourteen days on the roof.

Affairs resolved themselves into a game of see-saw between him and Wanjee. Whenever Jack was about the premises Wanjee might be seen sitting on her haunches near the hay, or asleep in the opposite hovel; whenever Jack betook himself elsewhere Wanjee ate the hay. Rather more than a fortnight after Wanjee's arrival—it was full moon at the time—her would-be captor expressed the determination of passing a night on the roof. He did so. Wanjee spent the night in the other hovel. When Jack came back from breakfast the hay was gone.

Then he tried another plan. After lowering the pail of water and throwing the night's hay into the corner he went off towards the house, whistling loudly. When a few minutes had elapsed he stole on tiptoe up to the elm-tree, took the rope in his hands, and struck vigorously. There was no Wanjee at the end of the rope. When he went round and looked through the gate, Wanjee was asleep on her straw, although she had been sitting not three yards from the noose less than five minutes before.

The next arrangement was that I should remain near the gate while Jack stood as far away as the rope would allow. I was to make a sign directly Wanjee put her head through the noose. For twelve long weary hours I waited there. Wanjee slept soundly all the time.

After this Jack took to sleeping at odd moments, sometimes by day, sometimes by night. He began to look worn and ill, all

his natural buoyancy appeared to be gone. One day—this was about five weeks after Wanjee came—he took the noose away altogether. I asked him what he was going to do. He said he did not know.

But he still continued to haunt the yard. Whenever I passed that way I saw him at the gate, resting on his elbows and gazing at Wanjee, while Wanjee, sitting on his haunches in the middle of the yard, was returning the compliment by gazing at Jack.

Before very long I became seriously concerned about Jack. His colour had fled; he ate barely enough to keep a mouse; I could hear him walking up and down his room at all hours of the night. In addition to these symptoms he became decidedly snappish, and would scarcely speak a word. Everyone advised him to go to the doctor, but he only went to the yard instead.

One morning, about half an hour after daylight, he came into my room. I started up in bed as the door opened. Jack's face was as white as a sheet—he looked like a walking corpse.

'H'sh!' he said in a whisper—'there's no one up yet. I've been awake all night. I—I've just come to say I've got it.'

'Got what?' I was genuinely alarmed, I thought of influenza, and heart disease, and small-pox, and consumption, and all sorts of horrid things.

'The way to catch her,' he answered. 'Only there's one—just *one*—chance against its succeeding. I—I wanted to ask if—if you'd so very much mind if she got away—I mean if you never saw her again.'

'Well——'

'Oh, of course, if you'd rather not risk——'

'Do exactly as you like,' I broke in hurriedly. I felt at the moment that Wanjee's escape or death would be a real blessing to everyone in the establishment; I felt that she was swiftly and surely bringing him to an early grave.

Something of its old cheeriness came back into Jack's voice as he answered:

'It's a thousand to one against her getting away, but as there *is* just that *one* chance I thought I'd better mention it. I'll go straight over to the town for appliances. Shall be back by breakfast-time or just after.'

We had nearly finished breakfast when Jack entered the room. A box of not inconsiderable dimensions was tucked under his arm.

'Fireworks,' he said, in answer to a chorus of interrogations. His face bore a placid smile, a smile of intense inward satisfaction,

a smile as of one to whom all life appears a thing of supremest happiness and joy.

Jack made a colossal breakfast, then, taking up his box, he started for the yard. I followed.

It is not necessary to dwell upon what Jack said, or what other people said afterwards, or even to state what my feelings were when I saw the yard gate wide open. Jack would commit himself no further than to say that he 'might *possibly* have forgotten to fasten the padlock.'

It was some weeks before I could throw off the habit of stopping to listen at every few steps, of avoiding all corners whatsoever, and of approaching with due caution any place where a pony might lurk unseen.

But Wanjee never appeared again. Probably she made the best of her way back to Glamorganshire. Even at this moment she may be cropping the grass upon her native hills.

No one has ever been able to find out what Jack meant to do with the fireworks.

NOTES

BY 'RAPIER'

SOME extremely interesting figures have been collected by a painstaking contributor to 'The Times,' showing the amounts won by the high-priced yearlings that have been sold during the last fifteen years, from 1883 to 1898. In all 398 yearlings were sold at public auction, for prices varying from 1,000 guineas to 6,000 guineas, making a total of 657,640 guineas; and these have between them won in stakes just 235,600 guineas. To this sum additions will in all probability be made next year by three- and four-year-olds, but they cannot very greatly reduce the deficit. Here is a little table:

Years	Number of yearlings sold	Prices given	Amounts won as 2-year-olds and 3-year-olds
		Guineas	Guineas
1895	22	46,200	1,475
1896	33	52,250	11,500
			as 2-year-olds
1897	26	39,100	6,000

This does not say much for high-priced yearlings in general, for it must always be remembered that the original cost is only the first item of expenditure; the man who pays a large sum for a horse naturally gives him plenty of chances by entering him liberally, and these entrance fees and forfeits may add something

like a thousand to the cost price, in addition to which there are training expenses and the numerous extras involved.

But there is another side to the question. The high-priced yearling *may* be an exceedingly cheap bargain. Memoir was bought for 1,500 guineas; she won in stakes 21,520 guineas and left the Turf worth many times over her original cost. Her sister, La Flèche, was bought for 5,500 guineas; she won in stakes 34,585 guineas (this does not include what she made by running seconds, 300 guineas in the Derby, &c.) and was sold at the end of her racing career for 12,600. Nice round figures, these! With her seconds she credited her owner with a good 47,000 guineas. Deducting her original cost and entries, &c., there was a clear profit on her which must have been well over 40,000*l.*, after all expenses had been paid. I do not know whether the Duke of Portland ever backed her. He did have a little money on Ayrshire, I believe, in order to reimburse himself for the presents a Derby victory would involve, but his betting transactions have been very few. These two famous sisters are exceptions, of course; but then it is in the hope of lighting on an exception that men pay big prices. Probably it is true that under 10 per cent. of expensive yearlings ever recoup their purchasers; still there are some grand prizes among the successful average, and in the case of well-bred mares a certain liberal return is practically assured.

It is curious to note what an enormous proportion of 'classic' winners have been home bred. In the last twenty years only a single winner of the Two Thousand Guineas has been bought, and that was Disraeli last season. He, by the way, was a high-priced yearling if 1,000 guineas is the limit, for he cost just that sum, though not at auction, and he cannot be rated as a failure; for, including his second in the Middle Park Plate, he won over 6,000*l.* in stakes, though he did not quite get back his first purchase money when sold the other day, broken down, for 850 guineas. Only two fillies not home bred have carried off the One Thousand in these twenty years; Busybody in 1884, who was an excellent bargain for Mr. Abington, and La Flèche. In the Derby, Harvester and Sainfoin are the two exceptions; in the Oaks there are five—Geheimniss, for whom Lord Stamford gave Tom Cannon 2,000 guineas, Busybody, Memoir, La Flèche, and Airs and Graces; in the St. Leger there are the two great sisters. I believe that very much the same proportion would be

found throughout the whole list from the very beginning of the five stakes. Every winner of the three annual 10,000*l.* races has been home bred, with the one exception of Love Wisely, for whom the late Mr. Hamar Bass gave 410 guineas.

Mr. Laird Clowes writes to me from Davos Platz as follows:—'In your December issue I see a paper on "British Sports and Foreign Descriptions," by Harold Macfarlane. Mr. Macfarlane says: "Some fourteen or fifteen years ago a very precious report of an England *v.* Australia match at the Oval, written by an adventurous Frenchman, was presented to English readers by a contemporary," and he then goes on to quote from an article which I contributed some time in the eighties to the "St. James's Gazette." I have seen that article quoted in Indian, Cape, and Australian papers as the serious work of a Frenchman. Last year I met it in the "Alpine Post," an English paper published here in Switzerland. I think that it is now time for me to say that I intended it as a burlesque, and that there is no drop of French blood in yours very truly, WILLIAM LAIRD CLOWES.' This is really a pity; for the delightful account of that match has been recognised as just precisely what a Frenchman, ignorant of the game, would have written. It is a brilliant bit of burlesque, but credit must be given where it is due, and thus it is bestowed on its ingenious author.

New blood is doubtless wanted in every department of sport under National Hunt Rules—new horses, new courses, new riders, and new stewards, which latter might well include new (and moderately energetic) members of the National Hunt Committee, for this last-named body is far too careless and lax. On the whole, however, the entry for the Grand National Steeplechase does not look so poor as there had been reason to fear. No fewer than five previous winners of the greatest of 'cross-country races are nominated—The Soarer, Wild Man from Borneo, and Father O'Flynn, three most moderate animals, neither of which is or was within measurable distance of the average of winners, with Manifesto, a good horse, and Drogheda, a long way inferior to him, I expect, but also a long way in front of the other three. Manifesto is said to be sound again; it is probable, I hear (I am writing just after a publication of the entries before things have settled down) that Williamson will ride him, and he may carry home successfully the 12 st. 7 lb. which I suppose the handicappers will give him. Gauntlet may have seen his best

day, and Ford of Fyne has been over-estimated. That good, gallant little mare, Parma Violet, has won so often that the handicappers are sure to burden her heavily; and she is such a little bit of a thing to jump those big fences with a lot of weight on her back! Cathal will have another try, I imagine, and he always goes close. Wonderful stories are told of what The Shaker could do at home with Parma Violet; in fact, it was because of his great superiority that she was sold so much under her value. Gentle Ida is bound to be dangerous if all is well with her, for she will be fairly handicapped as a matter of course. Furze Hill is a very promising young horse. Timon, too, is a more than useful animal. Last year some writers on sport, who knew nothing whatever about him, declared that they possessed certain knowledge of his well-being, and the undiscriminating backer of horses doubtless suffered for his faith in guides who it is to be hoped were not more than stupid and ignorant.

The Notes I wrote last month about the book 'Ten Days at Monte Carlo' have brought me a little flood of letters on the subject of systems—for and against the possibility of their existence; but unfortunately I cannot find room for even extracts. I have more than once, twice, or thrice met men who have set off for Monte Carlo perfectly certain that they had lighted on a sure road to success; I have met them, sometimes there, sometimes when they have come home again, have found them jubilant, and have heard on inquiry that the system was going strong and well: continuous play merely increased faith—for a time. Feeling some curiosity about this sort of thing, I have asked my discoverers of systems later on how the thing was going, and almost invariably have heard the same story. There was one fatal run that they had always felt might do them harm if it occurred; they could demonstrate by figures that it was not remotely probable it would happen once in two centuries; but somehow or other (they being, each and all of them, the unluckiest mortal that ever lived) it *had* happened to them, sometimes twice.

When I find men believing in systems, I merely conclude that they have not gone on at them long enough. One learns surprising things by experience. I had a most fascinating system once, the more enchanting to me because I discovered it myself. I used to go into the rooms at Monte Carlo to win five or six louis for the afternoon's expenses, and time after time in ten

minutes or so I had done it. To treat my grand discovery thus flippantly seemed absurd; so one evening I filled my pockets and went to the rooms to play seriously for reasonable stakes. Well, I had heard the formula or something like it before. It was not remotely probable that the amazingly, ridiculously, preposterously adverse run would happen once in two centuries, but it did happen that night, and I now know that my most ingenious system *can* go wrong. Of course I see the weak point now. I paid for the knowledge, and paid a lot of money too. The calculated odds are millions to one against things happening that seem to occur every other afternoon. I constantly think of the remark a croupier once made to an ardent believer in a system, on the Terrace one morning before the rooms opened. 'We sit there day after day, week after week, month after month watching the game; and we are not all fools. Don't you think, sir, that if there were any possible system of winning at roulette one of us would have discovered it before now?'

'V. B.' writes to me thus from Monte Carlo:—'My dear Rapier, I quite admit some of your criticisms on the system described in my little book, "Ten Days at Monte Carlo." The plan *is* tedious, and it is unlikely that the majority of players would have sufficient strength of will to stick to it; but then all systems, to be of any value, *must* be tedious, and people without great self-control had better leave them alone. But what I write to point out to you is, that you are giving people an entirely wrong idea of the progression employed. My method is to increase the unit to 2 when you have lost ten stakes of 1 *on balance*; to make the unit 3 when you have lost ten stakes of 2 *on balance* (i.e. when the score is 30); to raise it to 4 when you have lost ten stakes of 3 *on balance*, and so on. You would, therefore, begin playing in stakes of 15 louis when you were 150 louis to the bad, and not 350, as stated by you, and the player is never defeated until the bank has won 50 more bets than himself *on balance*.' I am sorry if I conveyed a wrong impression in my summary, but readers who are interested in the subject may be referred to the little book. One thing I might have remarked was that the tables ran very badly indeed for the exploitation of 'V. B.'s' system in the days' play that he records, and a detail I omitted to mention was that the brochure is an exceptionally convenient and accurate guide to Monte Carlo, and the neighbourhood for a good long way round, by an *habitué* really familiar with the place and its ways.

THE

BADMINTON MAGAZINE

March 1899

THE MAJOR AND THE BULL

BY A. G. BRADLEY

THERE are some people who, in the security of their fireside, profess to have no fear of bulls. You have only to show that noble animal, they declare, that you think nothing of him, to look him in the face, in short, and stroll past him in unconcerned fashion, to place yourself at once on a friendly footing with the big brute who could kill you in less than two minutes if he were so minded. These views are usually entertained by dwellers in counties where Herefords and Shorthorns prevail, secluded for the most part in byres and loose boxes, and familiar only to those who handle them.

No Welshman, at any rate, or anyone acquainted with the Principality, would be guilty of such levity. For the man who professed anything but respect for the black bull that so freely and inconveniently roams the green pastures of Wales would be almost too great a fool to live. You may, if you choose, of course, walk close by a Welsh bull as if unaware of his existence, but the chances are he will not thus ignore yours; or, again, you may look him sternly and steadily in the face: but my experience is that he is not in the least susceptible to hypnotism of this kind, and, if anything, resents it.

For my part, when bad fortune, as it often does, compels me to cross a field containing a black bull, I tread stealthily along the farthest end of it, invariably keeping a safe and negotiable

fence as handy as possible, and I am not in the least bit ashamed of saying so, for I know something of Welsh bulls. There is a trite proverb which tells us that familiarity breeds contempt. But it does nothing of the kind in this case; on the contrary, it stimulates respect.

The scene of the little episode I would venture to recall is the coast of Wales. I feel moved to express something like regret that it should be so greatly concerned with the noble game of golf, seeing how heavily this subject has been drawn upon in light literature of recent years. But this is accidental, and I hope my readers will bear with me; for, as a matter of fact, it is usually the gentle angler whom the Welsh bull looks upon as his special prey, and drives into deep pools or up trees. In this capacity I have myself had my alarms, and been more than once a witness to unpleasant adventures. But I have never seen such a narrow squeak as this one, where a seemingly inevitable tragedy was turned by a cool head into almost a comedy, in my life. The fact, too, of its having happened some dozen or more years ago, may perhaps mitigate the offence of adding another to the interminable list of golfing stories.

Now in these days there are at least three admirable and well-kept golf links upon the two coasts of North Wales, to say nothing of several more or less passable ones. At the time, however, of which I write, a bundle of clubs was an object of most inconvenient curiosity even at a London terminus. What astonishment these strange tools aroused in the heart of wild Wales may perhaps be imagined.

There was a certain obscure watering-place, however, on the Welsh coast, where for many years in succession a small group of friends, of which the writer was one, used regularly to foregather in the month of August. Sea-trout fishing in the rivers, together with the excellence of the sands for infantile recreation, were the main causes of this pleasant annual rendezvous. The nucleus of our party consisted of the excellent number of four, all of whom, by a curious coincidence, were even at that dim period ardent golfers. It may seem strange nowadays, when it is difficult to get five or six miles away from a golf course, that most of us, though living in various and civilised parts of the South of England, should have had no opportunities for play at our respective homes. So it is not surprising that we seized with alacrity upon what Nature, here on this low-lying Welsh sea-coast, had done for us; for she had, in fact, provided almost everything in the shape of a high-class course. We had turf of the right sort, for

the most part closely grazed. We had hazards, and bunkers of the kind that the *habitué* of seaside courses knows and loves. There were stretches of keen sward bordered with beds of rushes and patches of whins, and sparsely but sufficiently indented with trappy grips of sand. There were high green banks, too, here and there, under which sluggish streams rolled seaward, and last, but by no means least, fine tumbling sandhills, clad with bent grass, behind which lay natural greens in snug cuppy hollows.

Summer after summer we played over the same eighteen holes, which the Nestor of our party had with much judgment originally laid out, and the farmer who rented the grazing was happy enough in the trifling sum we paid him for the privilege, though feeling all the time, no doubt, by no means sure of our sanity. Made-greens, of course, we had to dispense with. All that a pair of shears and a clumsy dumper could do on the hard dry soil was done, but that was little. The putter was, in fact, at a discount; but all the other clubs enjoyed facilities which many an inland, aye and seaside course too, absorbing heaven knows how much money a year, might well envy to-day. I paid a visit to the old spot quite recently. Since I last saw it golf has grown into a popular and a national English game, instead of a mysterious operation only pursued by Scotsmen and a few cranks. I will not dwell on the reflections aroused by a solitary stroll over the familiar ground. They were reminiscent and savoured somewhat of melancholy, as was only natural. I had half expected to see greens and flags, and golfers in brilliant coats, enlivening the scene, but there was no sign of anything of the kind. The wide-stretching pastures and sand dunes were as deserted as when we had them to ourselves in the early eighties. The peewits, as of yore, were circling round with plaintive cries and drubbing wings above the rushy flats. The skylarks were springing from the tussocky grass, and amid the black cattle on the river bank stood the very duplicate of the perennial bull that was our only cross in those halcyon days. But above everything else it was borne in upon me what prodigious fools those responsible and eager for the advancement of what I will call Llanmorfa had been to let the whole coast of Wales equip itself with golf links which in no single case had possessed such original advantages as this old playground of ours.

Nor was it for want of telling; for the Major, of whom more anon, foreseeing the coming boom, used to harangue the local authorities with much useless vigour. But it was the brass band and the negro minstrel on whom they had fixed their longing

eyes, though they have not even yet come there. The hour for the golfer as a source of local profit has passed. Superior enterprise and common sense have drawn him and his money to rivals and neighbours. The visitors at that date, as they passed by the end of our course towards the beach, used to regard us with a mild wonder, inconceivable to the modern golfer, and remain hopelessly callous to the Major's shouts of 'Fore!' which, as a stickler for old forms and ceremonies, he used to insist on hurling at them. To do them justice the natives, who would wander leisurely about between the Major and the green he was approaching, probably took it to be an English word outside their limited vocabulary, while the English visitors, on the other hand, put it down as Welsh, and paid no attention to his passionate appeals.

Our party, so far as golf was concerned, though we had often temporary additions, consisted, as I have said, of four—namely, the Major already spoken of; a young Oxford don who, like a few Englishmen even in those days, had been thrown accidentally in his earlier youth upon Scottish links, and whom I shall call the Professor; a country parson who had enjoyed the same advantages at Westward Ho, and myself.

Now the Major, who had retired from the Service a dozen years before this, was getting on in life. He was a Scotsman, and might be described rather as having been born among golfers than as being a born golfer, this nice distinction being an obvious one to the initiated. Like many of his countrymen—as how could it be otherwise?—he showed his birth and training rather in his strict insistence upon old habits and traditions, and upon forms and ceremonies, than in long drives and safe approaches. His military career, too, had no doubt quickened his sense of order and discipline, and a family, which was the immediate cause of the Major's addiction to Llanmorfa and darkened its extensive sands, kept, so to speak, his hand in. Occasionally youngsters from school or college joined our circle, and, with a mixture of the contempt and curiosity then very prevalent, sought permission to try their 'prentice hand at the mysterious pastime. Upon these tiros, however, the Major was somewhat severe, and under his auspices the royal and ancient game did not seem greatly to commend itself to them. Their failure was a surprise unto themselves, and they usually drifted off with their tails between their legs to the simpler joys of the tennis club. Some of them no doubt are by this time scratch players, while the Major, God bless him, was in his palmiest days but a very

doubtful twelve, though no club committee which valued his services would have ventured to post him at two figures in the handicap list. But the Major regarded, and still regards, medal play, and indeed competitions of all sorts, with some contempt. His delight is still a foursome, with half a crown a hole on a real friendly old-fashioned match, made up the day before with much discussion over a glass of Scotch whisky. At the time I write of he was the leading spirit and initiator of the recently founded club at Crumpington, which was one of the earliest laid out inland links in the South. He still reigns over the golfers of that district with a rod of iron. No man has been known to wear a cricket blazer twice in his presence on the links, while his influence has been so excellent that even in the most tropical weather few Crumpingtonians venture to shed their coats. It is the only provincial club I know of where the gentler sex are kept relentlessly at arm's length. The Major has a holy horror of petticoats on the links or teacups on club-house verandahs, and the ladies of Crumpington and district have knocked for years in vain at the club doors. The first concession of this kind would certainly see the Major throw up everything, his house at Crumpington included, and depart. And this would be serious for many reasons, though there are husbands and brothers who declare that the club would survive the shock, while the ladies, with few exceptions, call its founder the strongest names their respective sense of propriety admits of, and fling anathemas after his tricycle as it rolls on its daily journey to the links.

Fortunately for the Major there are still some churls upon the committee of the Royal C.G.C. who agree with him, though at local tea parties they basely insinuate that the Veteran alone stands between the ladies and their hearts' desire.

But all this relates to the Major's home life, and has nothing whatever to do with his holiday visits to Llanmorfa, or of that incident of which I would speak, when the gallant warrior so nearly joined that greater and less exclusive and more shadowy majority to which we must all eventually attain. And it was a black bull that came so nearly sending him thus precipitately into the next world. Now it goes without saying that we were rarely without one of these amiable animals on some part of our Llanmorfa links. I often think how keen we must have been to have tempted Providence in this respect so frequently as we did: indeed, if it had not been for the Major's gibes, born of inexperience in this particular, but carrying nevertheless in other

respects the weight of years and authority, we should often have called a halt, or quietly omitted to play the hole near which our enemy was prowling. It was most noticeable, when fate did bring us into his neighbourhood, how everybody, even the Major, invariably pulled or sliced their balls according to the side upon which the bull was grazing. As a matter of fact, however, we were exceptionally fortunate in the temper of our animals; but one thing we did insist upon--namely, that the Major should not wear his red coat.

Now in those times, unlike these, a red coat carried in itself no little distinction, and a faded one struck awe into the members of the sucking clubs that were beginning to struggle into existence in various parts of the South, and the Major's coat was not only faded, but carried the collar and trimmings of a very much more famous corporation than the Crumpington G.C., to most of whose members in those days he could give a third or a half as well as crush them with his superior golfing lore. There is, I think, infinite pathos in the sight of these old players who have so often and so naturally had to take a back seat to the novitiates and even scoffers of a dozen years ago whose elementary efforts they once so patiently and patronisingly superintended. But sinewy limbs, athletic talent, and a quick-trained eye have played sad havoc with old Caledonian prejudices; for Scottish golfers had not generally a combination of these qualities to face in their own tiros of former days, when lairds and farmers and lawyers, who mostly played no other game, had the field to themselves.

But the Major had something else, besides his faded red coat and his long experience, on which he prided himself. It may seem ridiculous nowadays, when such appliances may be bought anywhere for a few shillings, but he had recently invented for himself, with a frequently expressed intention of patenting it, a three-legged stand for carrying his clubs, of a kind such as may be seen to-day upon any green, or procured at any shop. The Major's machine, however, was probably at that time the only one in England. The Crumpington caddies knew it well and cursed it, though under their breath; but the Major had quite enough calls upon his slender income, without throwing away ten or fifteen pounds a year on indifferent caddies, for he played every day in the week, except Sundays. We used to call the Major's patent his tripod, and banter him about it not a little. There were no bags in those days, and his clubs were held in place by a ring at the top, and there was room also for his umbrella, which was not as other umbrellas, but would have

easily covered a whole green of the size many golfing societies of the present day seem quite content with. I mention all this in some detail, because this improvised apparatus of the Major's beyond a doubt saved his life.

It was the last year we all met at Llanmorfa, though this melancholy fact was happily then hidden from our knowledge, and it was on a Sunday, I very well recollect, after a sermon in church by the reverend member of our foursome, that he and I and the Major were walking homewards to our various quarters. The Professor's lodgings lay upon the road. He was something of a delinquent in church-going, and his reverence, whose fag he had been at school, was declaring his intention of reassuming his old position and taking strong measures in the matter. But the culprit on this occasion was standing in the road in his slippers, and not only that, but was callously perusing the columns of a well-known sporting paper. As we approached he waved it about with a bravado that seemed under the circumstances almost indecent. But it was soon evident he had something of note to communicate, and to shorten my story this proved to be an advertisement which ran as follows:

'GOLF ON THE SEA COAST OF WALES.—One of the finest nine-hole courses south of the Tweed. First-class hotel on the links. Caddies, &c., in constant attendance. Apply to the Manager, Cambrian Hotel, two minutes' walk from Glanfawr station.'

Now Glanfawr (as we will call it) was barely an hour distant by rail. Our own links, it is true, had become greatly endeared to us; but, after all, playing without greens worth mentioning has its drawbacks, and moreover the novelty of a made-course on the Welsh coast had a fascination not easy to understand in these days. None of us had ever been to Glanfawr, and it did perhaps strike us as strange that we should be within so short a distance of such a paradise and yet fondly imagine ourselves to be the only golfers in the Principality. However, there was the invitation in black and white, as plain as daylight, and on the front page of a first-class paper. It might not be all that printer's ink painted, but it was a prodigious novelty in Wales, and there must at any rate be greens of some kind, and our fingers itched to use our putters. Our curiosity and interest, in short, were profoundly stirred, and we decided upon an investigation in force the very next morning.

Ten o'clock the following day found us rumbling along the Welsh coast full of anticipation and even of excitement that

would be unintelligible, I cannot repeat too often, to the pampered golfer of 1899. The natives who poured in at every station—for it was market day somewhere, as it always is in Wales—stared with amazement at our sheafs of clubs, the Major's tripod tempering their astonishment somewhat with the suggestion that we were land surveyors of a highly scientific and improved type. Glanfawr, which had thus trumpeted itself forth to the four corners of the earth as the pioneer of Welsh golf, had no pretensions to be fashionable or extensive. Still we had some vague expectations of being accosted at the station by a throng of urchins clamouring to be our club-bearers; so when we descended on to the platform and found ourselves its solitary occupants and the cynosure of fifty pairs of curious eyes at the train windows, something like a chill, I think, crept over the company, and a foreboding which we did not venture to express. There were no cabs either, such as usually haunt the nearest station to the humblest golf links. The stationmaster and the two porters looked hopelessly indifferent, and so we made our way along the melancholy street to the hotel, which was a prodigious building and dominated the village.

There was as yet no definite reason for us to lose confidence, and we mounted the steps to the hotel door with some alacrity and even cheerfulness. It was only the end of August, but things inside looked very glum; it was quite possible, however, at that hour of the day, that all the visitors might be on the links, and hope still lived.

There was a young lady in the office of the hotel, and to her we applied for general information; but she had none to give, having only just arrived from Manchester, and evidently in the sulks at being condemned to waste her charms and her frocks upon the desert air of a most insignificant Welsh watering-place.

We then inquired for the proprietor; but he had gone to Aberystwith or Bangor, I forget which, and perhaps it was as well for him that he had.

A waiter in a greasy coat and white tie now drifted on the scene, and to him we all addressed ourselves, speaking at once, and doubtless with some impatience. He was a German, come over, no doubt, to learn English (with a Welsh accent).

At the word golf he rubbed his forehead for inspiration, and not apparently in vain.

'Ah! is zat de game vot you play wid shticks?'

This was good enough, and there seemed some hope in it.

'Vait von minute and I will fetch de Boots.'

The Boots did not sound promising from a golfing point of

view, but at any rate we could discuss the situation as one Briton with another.

This functionary arrived, looking, like the rest of his kind, towsely and pallid, as if he and sleep were strangers. But he was an Irishman and quite cheery, though not quite sober.

'Look here,' said the Parson, 'where the—where are these golf links?'

'Sure, yer hanner, there right before yez.'

'How far before us?' said the Major, sternly.

'Well, that I couldn't rightly say, yer hanner.'

'Are they a mile?' said the Professor.

'Sure, an' they're all that, sor.'

'Who is there to show us the way?' said I.

'Well, sor, ye see the masther's gone to——'

The Major here interrupted with a fervent wish that he had gone to an unmentionable and tropical place.

'Is there anyone staying in the hotel?' said the Professor.

'There is not, sor, barrin' some ladies.'

'Damn!' said the Major, nobly taking upon himself the responsibility of speaking out for the company, for things were looking very blue indeed.

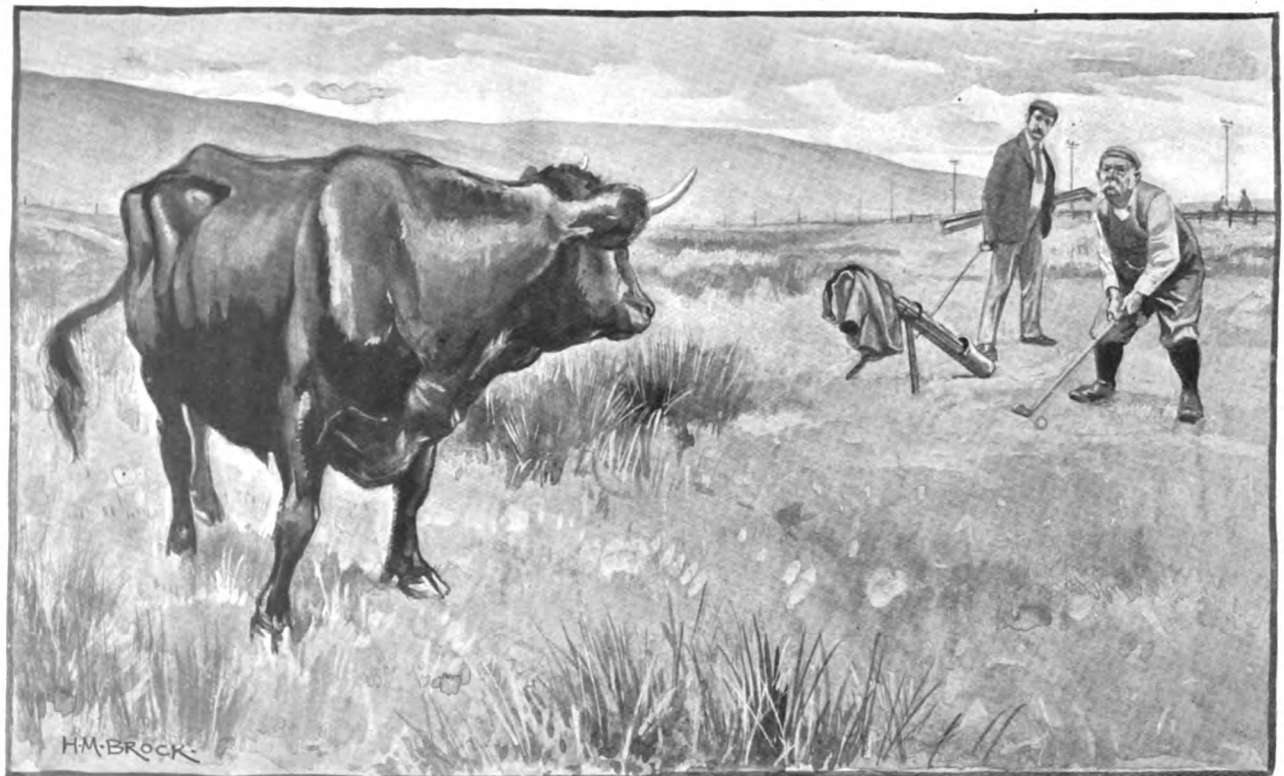
A consultation was then held by the scratch team who seemed to be running the hotel. The result of it was the despatch of the Boots to a remote part of the village where dwelt, it was understood, two small boys who were supposed to know something of the links, and had been known to carry the clubs of other fools like ourselves. In about half an hour the urchins arrived. Neither of them could speak a word of English, but seemed to know what was wanted of them, and started off in the direction opposite to the village, along the sea-coast. The Major, in the meantime, had donned his treasured red coat. There might be bulls on the Llanmorfa pastures, but they surely would not be browsing at large upon the 'finest golf links south of the Tweed,' and besides, as I have said, the Major was sceptical on the bull question. As he marched along shouldering the well-filled tripod, I have no doubt that the natives from their cottage doors mistook him in the distance for a recruiting sergeant of that gallant corps, the Welsh Fusiliers, this being their territorial district. At any rate, if his coat had any effect upon the locals, it was in this direction, which was hard, seeing that the Major had, no doubt, looked forward to impressing the novices he expected to find plodding round these popular links with its faded hues and distinguished collar and trimmings.

Our dumb conductors at length turned from the seashore road

and intimated by gestures that we might now commence operations. The country looked well enough, though uneventful, a moderate-sized common of short turf stretching from the railway to the seashore, cut up here and there by low enclosures. But there were no tees or sand-boxes, and no flags that we could see. One of the boys, however, cantered on and produced from its horizontal position a stick with a red rag attached, and here, at any rate, was the first of the nine holes. It was a melancholy business, but we had to see it out, for trains were infrequent. Still, the greens, though the boys had sometimes to hunt for them, had once known rollers, and we could use our putters in some sort of fashion. The course, like our own at Llanmorfa, was a natural one, though nothing like so good. It was very small, but nearly featureless, and had only its good turf to recommend it. Who the mysterious beings were that had thus left their marks upon it I do not to this day know.

Now we had played just four holes, and had succeeded in finding the traces of a tee on which to start for the fifth. A hundred yards ahead of us a high bank fence wrapped our future route in mystery, and presented the first really sporting hazard. The so-called caddies, however, had climbed on top of it, and intimated by signs that they were in a line for the next hole. It was the turn of the Parson and myself to drive, the result in each case proving satisfactory to ourselves and our respective partners. But now a strange thing happened; for, as we approached the hazard, the two caddies advanced to meet us, and intimated, by unmistakable gestures and much superfluous Welsh, that they had had enough of it, and urgent business required their presence at home. This was unexpected and exasperating, as we had made arrangements with them, through an interpreter, for the whole day. Had we understood the tongue of the ancient Britons, it is possible their motives at this moment might have been made evident. Indeed, for all I know, they may have been urging us to follow their example, though their gestures were not calculated to convey such an impression. However, it was not a very serious matter; so, shouldering our clubs again, we were soon clambering up the big bank, topped with a strand or two of wire, which separated us from the unknown beyond.

A nice pasture fenced in upon all sides lay beneath us; on some keen turf, between patches of rushes lying clear and close together, were the two white balls; but, peacefully grazing, about thirty yards from them, was as fine a specimen of a black bull as you could wish to see. How we could ever have been such fools as to contemplate a descent into that arena I cannot imagine.



GAZING AT THE AUDACIOUS INTRUDER IN MUTE ASTONISHMENT

The three younger of us, at any rate, ought to have known better; but it was probably that very youthfulness which was not proof against the Major's contemptuous snorts, for the Major was no fisherman, and did not know as much about Welsh bulls as we did. The 'Who's afraid?' cry started by that reckless veteran silenced our remonstrances, though I candidly confess, if it had been my turn to play, I would not have gone out and addressed that ball for all the majors in the British army.

Now we could easily see the next green, for the peastick and the red rag were for a wonder perpendicular in the hole. It was just about a full iron shot, and lay near the far corner of the field, and the non-players might by a slight détour reach it without great risk. It was just as well the Major had to illustrate the courage of his opinion, though it was hard on my partner, the Professor, who had to advance with him against the enemy and play my ball. We did insist, to be sure, that he should take off his red coat, though to play even a single shot in shirt sleeves was gall and wormwood to the Major, whose feelings had been racked by the hopeless improprieties of costume and upsetting of traditions he had to wrestle with daily, when at home, among the novices of the Crumpington Golf Club.

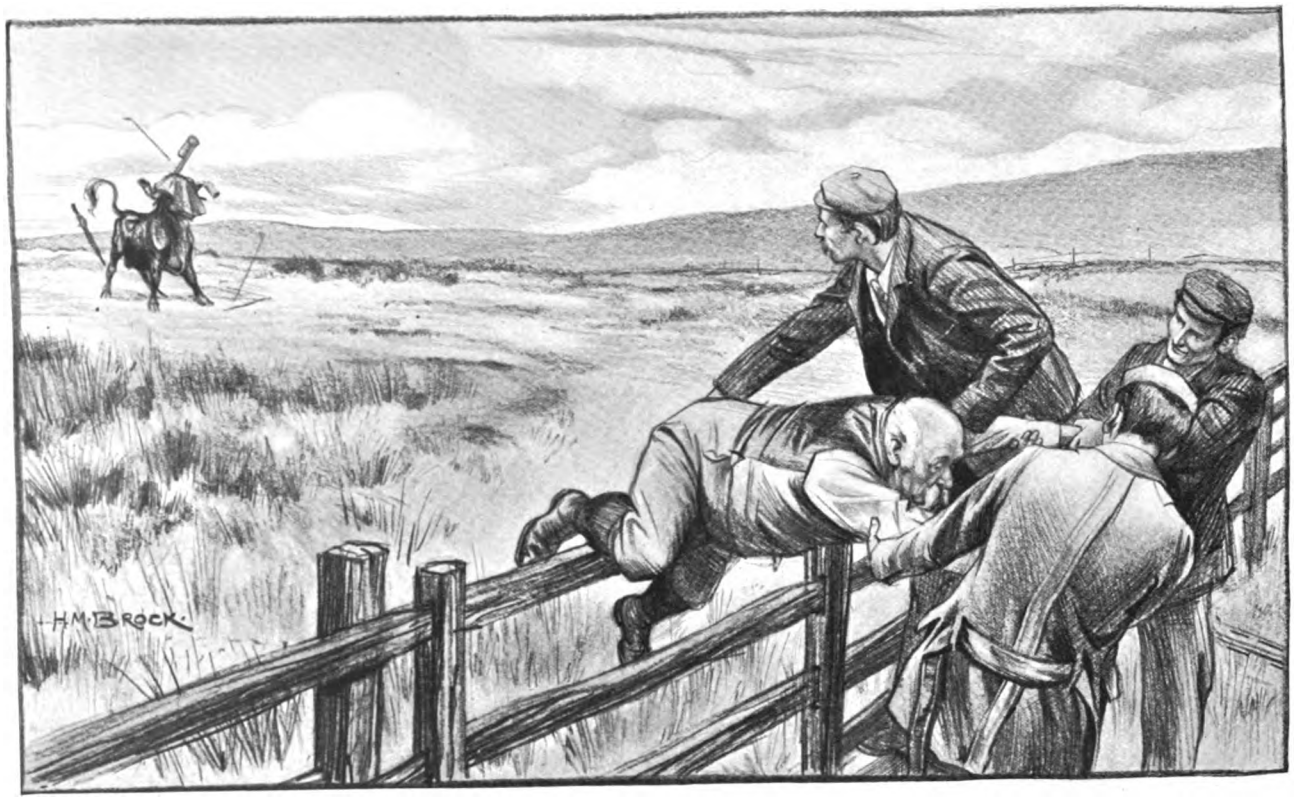
Now the railroad, protected by a strong, but readily negotiable, post-and-rail fence, lay all the time upon our right. The balls were lying a good sixty yards from it, but the Parson and myself, *en route* to the green, where, barring accidents, our services would be next required, could easily keep within handy distance of the friendly palings. Fervently did we pray that our partners would not foozle their shots. A clean drive our horned friend might possibly overlook, but fooling about with niblicks in the rushes which lay profusely around him, or ball-hunting under his nose, no black bull in the Principality would stand for a moment, and it would be our turn, too, in such an untoward eventuality, to take the leading part.

In the meantime we edged along without shame or compunction, handy to the railroad fence, while the Major stepped gaily out into the field and to his fate, the Professor doing his best to look unconcerned at his side. It was distinctly rough, too, on the Professor, as he had once been compelled to swim the Dovey, in a half-flood, for his life, and been twice treed on the banks of Carnarvonshire trout streams. The Major, after all, had better have worn his red coat than carry it on his arm, as he was now doing, for the lining was much brighter than the outside, and he displayed this with fiendish fatuity. 'His blood be upon his own head,' said the Parson, as he edged up within a club's

length of the fence, to which I fervently said 'Amen.' We were not kept long in suspense. The Major stepped briskly up to his ball, and with much calmness extended the legs of the tripod, and, setting it up with the coat on it instead of in it, proceeded to select his club.

The bull till this moment had seemed absent-minded, and the hope that he might belong to the unaggressive minority of his kind grew strong within us. But we were soon undeceived; for, as the Major drew his iron out, the big brute swung round, and, after gazing at the audacious intruder in mute astonishment for a few seconds, rent the air with a prolonged and stentorian bellow. It was a solemn moment. The Major, who was about to address his ball, gave pause, took a step towards his tripod, and began to feel for the handle, as if he and it, even in death, should not be divided. The Professor began undisguisedly to edge our way, while the bull proceeded to stamp his fore feet upon the ground till the earth shook, and then to lay his head near the turf and plough it up first with one horn and then with the other, in a fashion that would have made the ground committee of the Glanfawr G.C., if there had been one, weep—rumbling and snorting the while, and lashing his sleek black sides with his tail. The symptoms were unmistakable, and the situation already much too serious for any glimmer of satisfaction that the Major was having a much-needed and salutary lesson. That he, too, had realised this was quite evident; for, tripod in hand, the unfortunate coat trailing flauntingly from it, he was step by step commencing to move backwards over the woefully long space that divided him from the friendly railroad fence.

The bull, however, moved with him, stamping and throwing his head about, and bellowing and working himself up into a state of mind that we feared could have but one end. The Major, who had held the fine theory of overawing a bull by looking him in the eye, was having a lamentable awakening, and must have cursed his folly. It is a terrible thing, too, for onlookers to be perfectly helpless. We might, of course, have run out in the field and attempted a diversion, but the odds were that such a move would have brought on the very catastrophe that might even yet not overtake our friend. The Major was now about forty yards from the fence upon which we were standing. Why he stuck to his clubs passed our comprehension. If he had dropped them and retained his niblick, there would have been some kind of sense in the action. But he continued to creep backward, bearing his whole burden. The bull was about ten yards from him when the crisis, that we had hoped might even yet be averted,



FRIENDLY HANDS DRAGGED HIS EXHAUSTED AND ROTUND PERSON OVER THE STOUT PALINGS

occurred. He was not such a fool as to let his victim escape so easily, and having had his preliminary sport, gathered himself together, and with one bellow went straight for the Major as only a black Welsh bull in a bad temper can go.

Now you may rush forward and drag a human being out of the way of a locomotive, but the locomotive goes and is seen no more. A fierce bull is another matter. An unarmed man is absolutely powerless; nothing but a gun or a dog is of the slightest avail. You have practically a railway engine with full steam up threatening you; you can only hope he won't charge; but when he does, why 'Whar is you?' as the darkey said of the railway smash.

What we might feebly have attempted with our niblicks in case the bull had succeeded in reaching the Major, Heaven knows. But we did not know that the resourceful and gallant warrior had in that agonising moment a card up his sleeve yet to play; for, as the animal charged blindly and head down after the fashion of his kind, the Major faced him, planted his tripod laden with a dozen clubs, umbrella and coat, directly in his path, and then turned and ran for his life, looking neither to the right nor left till three pairs of friendly arms dragged his exhausted (for he was no sprinter) and rotund person over the stout palings. It was really a fine exhibition of presence of mind, and was a great sight to see, though I am anticipating by a few seconds; for what chiefly filled our vision was the whole of the Major's outfit in the air, and the bull with head erect, looking out apparently for the body of that gallant person to fall upon his horns.

At such a moment one's ideas get a bit confused, but it certainly seemed to be raining clubs and umbrellas on the head and on the mighty back of the fierce beast; but the Major haply was not among them. When the smoke of battle, to speak figuratively, had cleared away, we were all well intrenched behind our fortification, and the enemy was going up and down on the other side at a shambling trot, and swearing as an angry and defeated, not to say insulted, bull can swear.

In the fury of the charge one horn had penetrated the Major's red coat, and it was still flapping over the brute's eyes like a matador's mantle. Whether, too, in getting his head underneath the prongs of the tripod they had stuck to his neck, or had at first gone up in the air with the rest of the Major's baggage and come down in such fashion, I cannot say; but there it was, the notable patent as well as the historic coat, clinging in tenacious fashion to the head of a Welsh bull whose vengeful attack upon their owner they had so gloriously defeated.

I suppose the animal had had enough; for, after shaking off the tripod, he went off bellowing and tail in air to the further end of his domain. It took us some time to collect the Major's precious clubs, each one of which had of course a special history, and they were in great force, seeing that the services of caddies had been counted upon.

It was no wonder our boys had refused to go further, and their retreat was fully explained, though rather late in the day. We ourselves were in no frame of mind to exploit the remaining four holes. The railroad fence was right enough, but for all we knew our friend might fly any other obstacle on the course with ease.

So we walked back along the railway track, for safety's sake, to the inn, and took an earlier train, thereby sacrificing the pleasure of interviewing the enterprising advertiser of the 'finest golf links south of the Tweed.' I have always been anxious to know whether this course, which had quite tolerable possibilities, had developed into a recognised resort, with golfing conveniences and without bulls; but I have scanned those prodigiously dull records of monthly medal competitions that the press, I presume, find themselves compelled to publish in vain for any mention of it.

The coincidence is singular, but that I cannot help, and would only remark in conclusion that I met a lady on a coach in North Wales the other day who for her sins had just been spending a month at Glanfawr. I asked her if golf was still a feature of the place. She replied that it was, but suffered under difficulties of many sorts, and that she had herself seen from her window a foursome on a putting-green ignominiously routed by a bull. The chords of memory, as may well be imagined, were greatly stirred within me as I eagerly inquired the result.

'Well,' said she, 'they all threw down their clubs and ran in different directions, and the bull seemed so utterly confounded and undecided which to pursue, that he came to a standstill and amused himself with these abandoned clubs instead.'

The Major still has his coat, sewn up where the bull's horn tore it, hanging in his locker in the gorgeous new club house of the Crumpington G.C. And the tale that hangs thereby has been told so often as almost to constitute another grievance against him on the part of those members who are not gifted with the bump of reverence. As may be inferred from what I have already hinted, there are many Crumpington people, both inside and outside the club, who wish that bull had caught the Major—long life to him!

THE LUCK OF THE ONE-HORNED ELK

BY GERARD FERRAND

'IT is my opinion you will have no more luck until you have killed the old white bull of Svè Fjeld!' Thus, in an oracular manner, spoke old Jakob S——, the largest forest-proprietor and small boss of that part of North Trondhjem's Amt where I was then hunting. Having tossed off a stiff glass of grog I had given him, he opened the door and passed silently out into the darkness of the night, admitting into the room an icy blast of the bitter north wind, with the usual accompaniment of snow-flakes and hail. Three or four neighbours out of the scanty population of the district, in addition to my hunting follower and my travelling servant, had been sitting late one evening in the kitchen of the shanty I occupied, discussing the mad freaks of a certain gigantic white bull-elk with only one horn, that had frequented the district during the latter part of the summer and autumn. There was a considerable air of mystery surrounding this animal, especially as to the location of the single horn, some even declaring that it stood out from the centre of his forehead, resembling that mythological beast the unicorn. The neighbours held various opinions about him, and old widow Larsen considered he was a very dangerous and evil-tempered brute; for not only had he repeatedly charged her cows when feeding out in the forest, but one afternoon, quite recently, when her *Huusmand* old Ole (pron. *Oolah*) Nilsen was bringing in some of the coarse forest hay from one of the stocks away up in the woods, the animal suddenly dashed out from a dense thicket, went for the horse and sleigh, capsized the hay, and scattered it about in all directions, injuring the horse, and nearly scaring old Ole into fits. Again, not very many

days previously, late one evening, I heard a loud tap at the window of my room on the ground floor. Looking out, I saw a man beckoning to me, and told him to come in. He entered, and informed me in an excited manner that he had been almost scared to death and driven up a tree by a fearsome-looking white bull-elk that stood in his way in the middle of the narrow forest path he was walking in, about two miles from the *gaard*. Without any warning but a loud snort, the animal charged him, and nearly pinned him to the tree, against which he butted for fully half an hour after he had escaped up it. He had often seen elks, but this one for size and appearance beat the record. He could see the single horn distinctly in the moonlight, and insisted that it stood straight up from the centre of the forehead! I smiled incredulously as I offered him a stiff dram of *aquaviit*, which he eagerly accepted; after this he wished me good-night, with good luck in hunting the gruesome beast, and departed. Now I had been hunting hard for two months in that district, where I had acquired a large extent of forest, with a great many elk-hunting rights; yet though elks were plentiful enough, and several bears were roaming around, I had not fired a shot at either elk or bear for a whole fortnight, though at first I had tolerably good sport, having bagged five bulls, not without some hard running on occasions; but latterly a series of most unlucky days had continued without a break, strange to say, from the day I first hunted that weird-looking old bull with the one horn.

The weather had been most unpropitious through the greater part of October, blizzards of hail and snow from the N.W., accompanied by deluges of rain, having prevailed. And when at last the snow began to lie, a frost set in, causing a most vexatious crust of ice to form on its surface, rendering it almost an impossibility to approach any animal. I had tried all manner of crafty dodges to get near the old bull, as I was perpetually crossing his tracks, and coming upon him in the most intricate parts of the forest, but as yet had never caught any but a passing glimpse of his white body, as he dashed through the woods with the speed of a meteor. He gave us the slip time after time in the most aggravating manner, and, like a cunning old Exmoor stag, would start fresh deer, disturbing the whole country far and wide, and ruining my chances of a shot for the rest of the day; and, latterly, my three elk-hounds had become so footsore, owing to the ice-crust, that I could not use them.

Though I never had a good view of the white bull in the open, I could always recognise his tracks by the great length of

his hoofs, especially the hind ones, which were curved inwards in a curious manner. With regard to the single horn, about which I had heard so much, it was certain that the malformation, however caused, could only be a growth of that year, owing to the fact that the animal must have cast his horns some time during the previous winter. I had never heard of such a beast the year before; white bulls I had once or twice heard about, though never seen, and towards the latter end of the sixties had killed a gigantic old barren cow, which was almost white. But a white bull with, according to report, a single horn proceeding from the forehead

THE AUTHOR'S FIRST VIEW OF THE ONE-HORNED BULL ON SVÈ FJELD

like a unicorn, was a strange variety of the genus *alces* of which I had as yet had no experience.

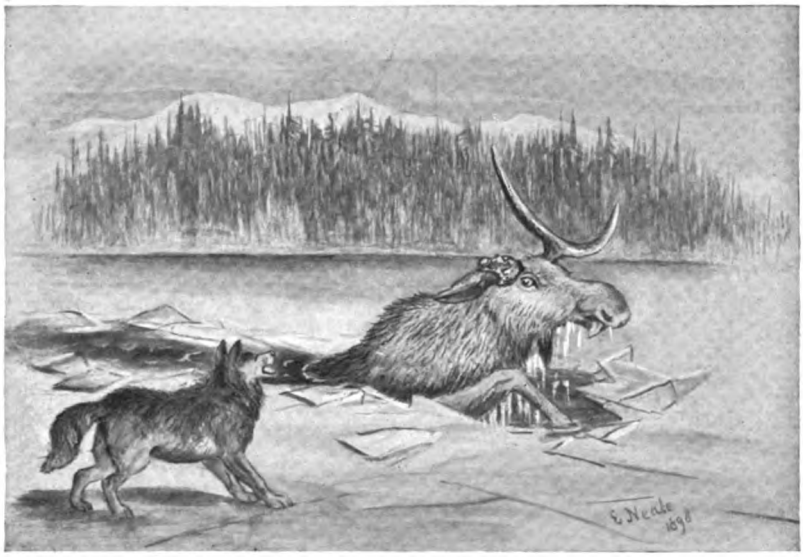
The close season, which at that period began November 1, was now near at hand, so I determined to have another good hunt after the white bull; not that I attached any importance to old Jakob's oracular words, but my curiosity had been greatly aroused about him, and I also hankered after a shot at him to pay off old scores for the many unsuccessful chases he had led me. Next morning, therefore, I made an early start, accompanied by Johannes, the owner of the *gaard*, taking my best and staunchest elk-hound, Trofast, who appeared by that time tolerably fit again. We made straight for the lofty wooded upland

called Svè Fjeld, which was often the haunt of this eccentric, weird-looking beast. After a stiff pull up the hill, we had nearly arrived at the long undulating plateau forming the summit, where, there being little or no crust on the snow, we proceeded noiselessly. Suddenly I felt myself pulled by the arm from behind, and forced down by the side of a fallen tree, at the same time Johannes, in an excited manner, exclaimed, 'Look there! the white bull!' I eagerly followed his glance, and, for the first time, had a good view of him. Yes! there he stood without a doubt, the cunning old devil! at a distance of about one hundred yards, with his long ears pointed towards us as if critically examining us from a clump of dead pines, almost as weird-looking as himself.

We had that instant barely emerged from the thick cover of the woods, through which we had proceeded in the most cautious manner possible, and I do not think more than the tops of our heads could have been visible. At the moment, I was unluckily looking in the opposite direction, as my dog was sniffing the air from that quarter; for as yet, to my surprise, we had not seen any tracks. I was therefore in hopes he had not seen us, but had merely heard suspicious sounds. But no! he was not to be deceived, and long before I could slip off the short woollen cover that I used for my rifle in snow-time, he had grasped the situation, and giving a loud snort with his huge nostrils, and tossing his ugly head high into the air, he dashed off through the trees with the speed of a lightning express. The way that animal annihilated distance, and ploughed up the surface of the snowy landscape, scooping up the peaty soil beneath, and flinging it far up into the air behind him, was a most instructive lesson in elk-craft. He fairly flew along the steep slope, as if a red-hot volcano were under his feet, without even giving me the ghost of a chance to get a shot at him on account of the trees. Jump! Indeed he did! A fallen tree with big branches underneath that lay in his course, which I could walk under without my head touching, he took in his stride. I paced one of his leaps on the sloping side of the hill, and found it twenty-eight feet from toe to heel. Vaguely I hoped he would tire after running a mile or two and halt for a rest. Vain delusions. There was still, however, one chance for me. He was making for a wooded ravine, beyond which lay an oval-shaped lake about a mile in length and nearly half a mile in width, across which, before the frost, he had constantly been in the habit of swimming, thus giving me the slip. This had been only recently frozen over, so I felt sure that it was neither thick enough to bear, nor thin enough for him to break

through ; on the other hand, the dog would be able to run on the ice, and drive him back to the shore. So, after a hurried consultation, I despatched Johannes in all haste with orders to slip the dog as soon as he reached the other side of the ravine.

In the meantime I rushed along the slope towards the lake, which was much nearer to me, as the bull was going in a roundabout way to reach it. Before many minutes I heard the loud barking of the dog which had just viewed the game. As we had surmised, the ice bore the dog but not the elk; it was too thick for him to swim through: therefore, as soon as I got to leeward of him, I descended the slope. The dog soon headed the



IT WAS MOST EXCITING TO WATCH HIS STRUGGLES IN THE WATER

bull, which had broken through the ice for a short distance. It was most exciting to watch his struggles in the water, and his frantic endeavours to break through the ice; he kept on trying fresh places until forced to return to the side he had started from. Soon I found out an open place near the lake-shore, where I calmly awaited developments. The creature seemed exhausted by his efforts in the water; for, after landing, he trotted at a slow pace in my direction, with the dog bounding ahead of him. I felt almost sure of him now, as he seemed to be coming straight for me, but suddenly the sounds became more and more indistinct, and I found he had turned down a small gorge to his left. As

I ran to cut him off, I caught sight of him at a distance of eighty or ninety yards, and had two quick shots at him as he was ascending the opposite bank. He staggered at the second shot, but held on his course, and when Johannes at length rejoined me, we followed fast on the trail. After half an hour's stiff run we found he was standing at bay some three hundred or four hundred yards off, and were cautiously approaching the spot, Johannes being close behind me, with his rifle (which, as a special favour, I had allowed him to take out) in his left hand, when suddenly *bang*! off it went, smashing a bough close to my left arm.

'What on earth has happened now?' I angrily exclaimed.

'Oh, it's this confounded rifle of mine,' replied the wretched man, turning ghastly pale, and looking very much like Mr. Winkle when his gun went off at an unlucky moment; 'it went off of its own accord, as I only hit it slightly against a tree.'

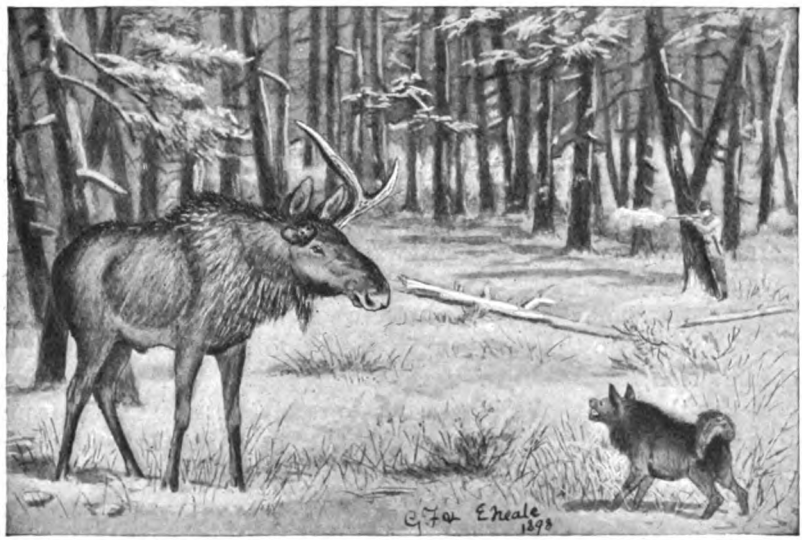
'I wish it had killed that old devil of a bull of its own accord,' I remarked sarcastically; 'then it would have done some good.'

This was an old muzzle-loader lately converted to a Remington breech-loader by a local blacksmith, and I had given him strict orders not to load it without permission.

As there was no time to lose in angry recriminations, we quickly followed on the trail. It was obvious that the bull was not likely to waste time fooling around there after he had heard the shot, so another laborious trudge, with the usual break-neck flounderings through the snow, took place. At last, in spite of the dog's efforts to head him, he reached the lake again, and for the second time frantically plunged on to the ice, trying his level best to force a passage through to the other side, but was again driven back by the dog, who never gave him a moment's rest, but pressed him hard, baying within a few inches of his nose.

At length he was fairly forced to the shore, and, after running another half-mile or so into the forest, was brought to bay in a wooded dell not far from the lake. I thereupon quickly descended the hill-side, taking advantage of every bit of cover afforded by the numerous trees, and presently, to my intense satisfaction, found myself within sixty yards of the old one-horned bull. I gave him a short shrift and a sharp one, as I carefully raised my rifle and planted a ·500 conical bullet in his heart, which brought him down dead without a struggle. He proved to be an immense animal, with an unusually light grey skin, causing him to appear nearly white in the sunshine and by moonlight; his body was of a great weight, with huge massive limbs, such as I had never

observed on any bull-elk previously; his hind hoofs were very long, and curved in a curious manner. A thick knob, some four inches in length, took the place of the right horn, and on the left side a massive beam, with two long thick points, grew straight out from the side of the skull in the usual manner, and *not* from the top without any kind of palmation. He was quite twenty-five years old, or even more, perfectly sound, and not damaged in any way, except as regards the right horn. It was marvellous how an animal of that age and size could get over the ground in the manner he did. '*Nu skal vi have lykke med bjöenerne!*' (Now we shall have luck with the bears!) exclaimed Johannes,

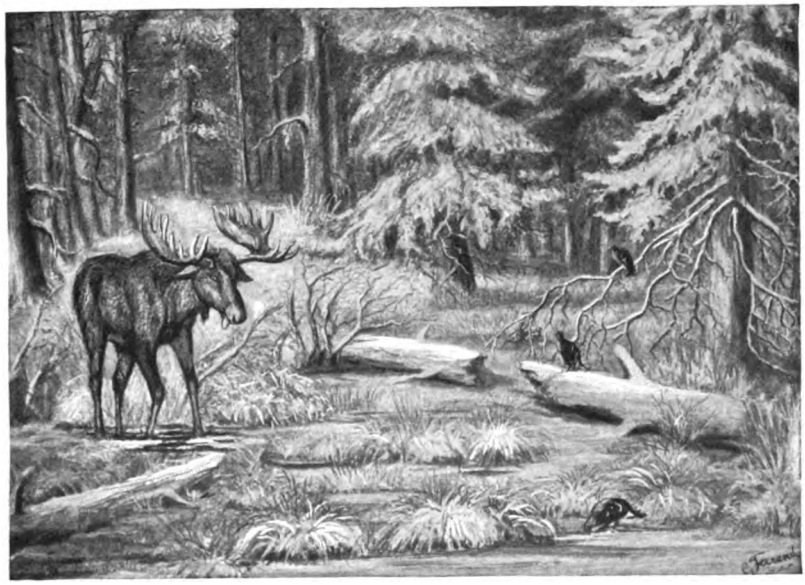


FOUND MYSELF WITHIN SIXTY YARDS OF THE OLD ONE-HORNED BULL

with a satisfied grin on his countenance, as he critically surveyed the gigantic proportions of the big *elg-oxe* (bull-elk), with a view to his future destination in the salt-tubs. Johannes, who was full of regret about the accident, then explained to me that when running round the lake to head the bull, he had clapped in a cartridge, having made up his mind that he would shoot and risk my displeasure should the animal succeed in forcing a way through the ice to his side, to prevent the chance of his escaping us again. In the excitement of the chase he had forgotten to take it out again, and had probably left the hammer at full cock. I was satisfied with this explanation, but at the same time could

not help feeling I had had a very narrow escape. On skinning the animal we found, much to my surprise, only one bullet in the body; so, after all, I had made a clean miss of him when running up the steep bank, and should undoubtedly have lost him if my dog had not been a first-class one, and as good as they are made. After a snack of food, I determined, as there were still two or three hours of daylight, to hunt some fresh ground in another direction, my experience being, that after a run of bad luck, should you once break the spell, you ought to press your luck all you can, as the unexpected is sure to happen some day or other, and everything comes to those who wait. About an hour afterwards, as I was cautiously proceeding along a gentle decline, Johannes leading the dog several paces behind, as we were then going down wind, and there were no signs of spor, I unexpectedly started a full-grown elk which was lying under a thick clump of trees within ten paces of me. Why it had not winded me I could not imagine. It raced round the corner of some rocks before I could raise my rifle, but I instantly sprang forward, and got a quick snap-shot at its broadside as it dashed through a small opening about fifty yards off. At the time I never noticed any horns, so knew not whether it was a bull or a cow; neither did my man, who saw part of the body but no more. I followed the spor for some distance, but seeing no blood, concluded I had missed, owing to the number of branches in the way; so, after a consultation, as we both felt certain it would turn out to be a cow (for the tracks of a large cow are rarely distinguishable from those of a bull), and as it was hardly worth while to slip the dog on the tracks so late in the day, we left the trail, and wended our way homewards. We had only proceeded a few hundred yards when Johannes, who was behind, pointed out to me a thick clot of blood on the back of my left hand mitten—fresh blood, sure enough, but where from? From the body of the elk last shot at without a doubt. I immediately returned, and we closely examined all the lower twigs and branches, and near the place I had left the trail, we discovered some thick clots, about four or five feet from the ground, on the twigs of some seedling firs which the animal had brushed against on his way through, and whence assuredly came the blood on my mitten. It was all plain sailing now, and we followed again on the tracks. After half an hour's sharp running, as we found we were going down wind a bit, I was on the point of slipping the dog, when straight before me I caught sight of the elk's back, about 200 yards off; it was slowly limping along down an open glade amongst some

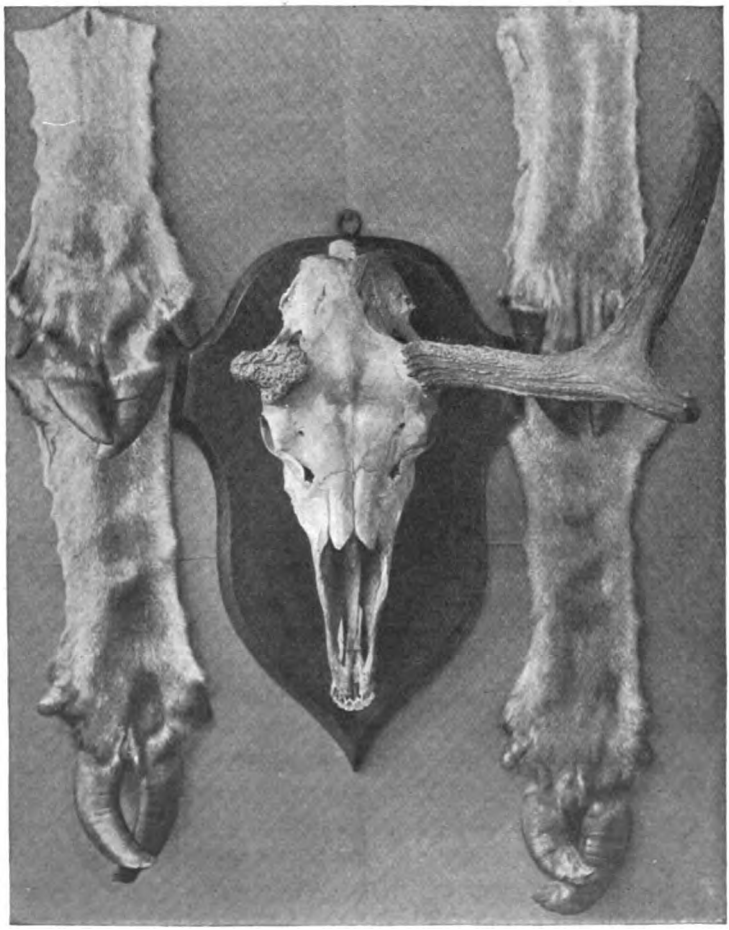
big spruce trees, towards a small boggy tarn just ahead of it; it was quite evident to my mind that it was badly wounded and wanted water. After a short consultation I left my man with the dog, and hurried some distance round to get well on the lee-side of the animal. I accomplished this to my satisfaction, and as I approached the tarn could distinctly hear it breaking the ice with its fore-feet. I crept on and looked cautiously through the branches of a fir tree towards the spot, when great was my astonishment and delight to see a fine bull with splendid antlers. He certainly looked bad, and seemed rather groggy on his legs;



A FINE BULL WITH SPLENDID ANTLERS STANDING IN THE TARN

but there was no time to lose, as these animals soon recover themselves, so quickly levelling my rifle at his broad chest, I fired. He crashed forward through the ice into the shallow water of the pool, where he lay kicking amongst thick tufts of rough grass and broken pieces of ice. I soon finished him, however, and had the satisfaction of gazing on a splendid head—ten points on one horn and nine on the other. This was a grand piece of luck, and more than I deserved, since, as a rule, I consider snap-shots at big game should be avoided, owing to the uncertainty of killing, and the unnecessary pain caused to the animal if not brought to bag. There was considerable excitement amongst the neighbours

when it became known that the old white bull was killed, and still more so when my additional piece of good luck was proclaimed, causing old Jakob to observe to me later on that he had proved a true prophet after all, which remark I was unable to gainsay. The following morning, after arranging about the

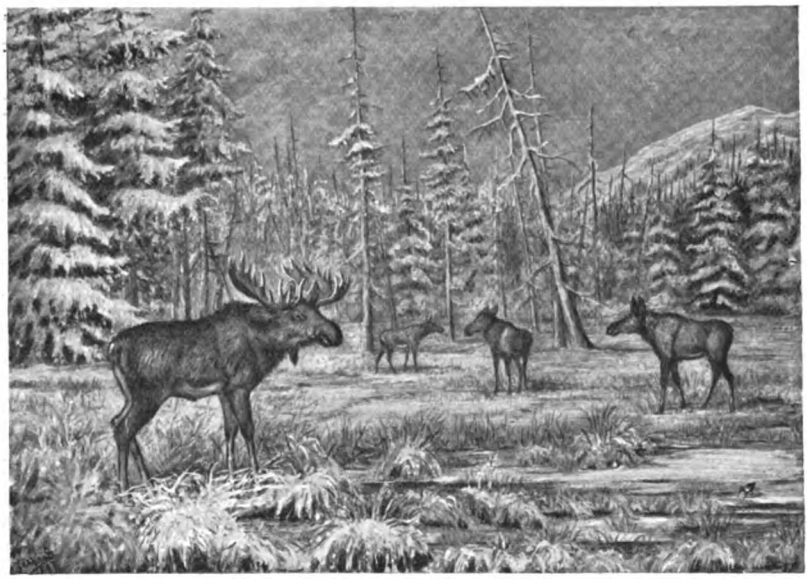


HEAD OF THE ONE-HORNED ELK

bringing home and distribution of the carcases, I left at an early hour on another hunt. We were not very long before we found fresh tracks, which appeared to be those of three cows. We followed them, however, cautiously and silently, avoiding the ice-crust all we could; but though we made all the speed possible

under the circumstances, we had not come within sight or hearing of the animals by mid-day. The trail then led us along a wooded hill-side covered with mountain-ash trees of a good size, and tall saplings of the same species, bowed down with the weight of snow and the immense clusters of ripe berries at the end of the branches, as these had been very late in ripening that year.

On this occasion, therefore, I enjoyed a lovely sight, as I passed under thousands of these elegant-looking saplings, which were bowed down in graceful curves, with the masses of rich scarlet berries presenting a picturesque contrast to their



HE STOOD BROADSIDE ON TO ME

glittering coverings of hoar-frost and snow, especially with a brilliant blue sky as a background, and the dazzling rays of the midday sun scintillating around them ; it was a continuous study in red, white, and blue, and afforded me one of the most beautiful sights it had ever been my lot to gaze upon in Arctic forests. There were many signs of bears on these slopes, and I noticed that they had quite recently been clawing down the berries from the trees, therefore kept a good look-out, as I would naturally have given them the preference. On emerging from the Rowan forest we found the trail led downhill, towards an open boggy tract, having a few trees scattered about its surface, providing

very little cover; we, therefore, approached it with extreme caution, making for a small knoll which seemed to promise a good view over it. On reaching the summit and looking carefully over, I caught sight of four elks, a big bull and three cows. The bull had a grand pair of antlers, and was a splendid-looking animal, having apparently just joined the others. He stood broadside on to me at the edge of a small tarn, but as I inspected him through the glasses, I could see he was restless and suspicious, as also were the cows, for they stalked uneasily to and fro over the frozen bog sniffing the air as if scenting danger. It is difficult to calculate distances on the snow, especially when there is a strong glare from the sun as on this occasion, and in addition a lurid black cloud was spreading over the mountains in front of me. However, it was much too tempting a shot to lose, though quite 250 yards, if an inch; so, trusting to luck, and as the cows showed evident signs of stampeding, I lay down, took a careful aim behind his right shoulder, and fired. He stood still for a second or two, then staggered forward on to his knees; but, recovering himself, walked slowly straight away for a short distance, then broke into a trot. The cows dashed off after the shot, and I saw them no more. I fired once more at the bull, but as he was going straight from me at 300 yards distance, it was of no use, and he soon reached the shelter of the forest, where he halted for a time, and I watched him with the field glasses walking slowly through the trees to the left, whereas the cows had taken a contrary direction. As it is not advisable to press a wounded animal when unaccompanied by an elk-hound, we waited for a time and took some lunch, after which we started again on what turned out a long toilsome chase, which caused me to regret many times that I had risked such a long shot. I did not succeed in approaching near enough for another shot at the bull that evening, and the last I saw of him he was slowly crossing an open glade at some distance ahead, where I was forced to leave him, as it was getting late. About half an hour after leaving the trail, we struck perfectly fresh tracks of two bears that were apparently going in the direction from which we had just come; we should probably have come across them if there had not been a hill intervening. It was far too late to do any good by following them, so we proceeded on our way home, my man observing that if they fell in with the wounded elk they would probably attack and kill it; but I did not think there was much chance of that, as, during a long experience, I had only known one instance of a bear killing a big bull-elk, and that was in the early summer when his horns

were in the velvet, so I considered the big bull was very well able to take care of himself if not too badly wounded. After a weary trudge over the snowy landscape by moonlight, we arrived late at the shanty, arranging for an early start on the morrow. We first went direct to the place where we had seen the bears' tracks the previous evening, and quickly followed their trail, which after a time we found led in the direction the bull had taken. Later on we found the tracks of the bears intermingling with those of the elk, and continuing together through the woods without intermission, until about one o'clock, on emerging towards an

THE BULL HAD BEEN FORCED DOWN ON HIS KNEES TO THE GROUND

open space of field, we found the spot where the bull had lain down to rest. There were various bloodstained marks from the bullet wound in his snowy bed, and on closely examining the tracks we soon discovered what strange things had occurred, and little by little unravelled the mystery of a forest tragedy. Whether by accident or design, there is no doubt the bears had come upon the wounded bull whilst lying in his bed, but whether the bull opened the attack or the bears were the first aggressors, it was plainly evident that a tough fight had taken place some time in the small hours of the morning and long before sunrise. We

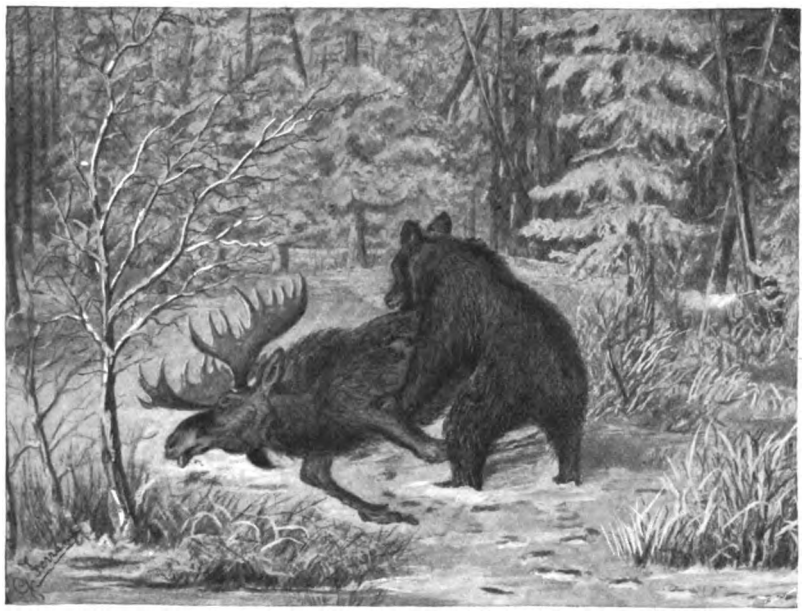
could trace all the marks of the struggle: how at one time the bull had been forced down on his knees to the ground, but, recovering, had butted at the bears and kept them at bay. They must have continued the fight for some time, until one of them apparently received a prod from the bull's brow-antlers and retreated from the conflict, as we saw blood for some distance on his trail, which led away up a steep hill to the left. The bull appeared to have been left face to face with the bigger bear of the two, and to have had a severe tussle with him, judging by the marks in the snow; but it ended in the bull's favour, as by degrees he forced the bear backwards to the brink of a steep rocky ledge, butted him with his horns, and finally sent him flying over the side. There was no doubt whatever about this fact, as it was as plain as the sun at mid-day. He flopped over into a mass of snow-laden juniper bushes about forty feet below, which broke the force of his fall, as he did not seem in any way damaged by it. He had declined to renew the combat after this, however, as there were no signs of a fresh struggle.

After we had solved the mystery of these numerous tracks to our satisfaction, we proceeded on the spor of the bull, which we followed at a smart pace for another couple of hours. It was now becoming apparent that the bull was nearly played out, and had in fact laid down to rest more than once, and at last, on cautiously approaching an open glade near a small tarn, I saw him standing perfectly still, having apparently just risen. The snow was quite soft here, so I had no difficulty in stalking him, and with one shot brought him down dead in his tracks. He had a splendid head of ten points on each horn, and I considered it a great piece of luck bagging him so soon, though he could never have lived long, as the wound was in the middle of his body, the bullet being flattened against the skin on the other side. How he managed to escape the bears was a puzzle. We had to hurry home double quick soon after the death of the bull, as a severe snow-storm set in, and we completely lost our way when within an hour or two of the shanty, and had to take shelter for some time under some large spruce firs. It cleared up about nine, when the moon rose, so we made the most of it, but did not reach the house till nearly eleven. The following morning we left an hour or two before the men were to start with the horses and sleighs to bring back the carcase of the elk, because I had a very strong impression in my mind that one of those bears would come foraging around to hunt again for the elk. When I neared the spot therefore, after a three hours'

SENT HIM FLYING OVER THE LEDGE

trudge. I proceeded very cautiously, and was pleased enough when, from some high ground, I spied a bear standing over the dead bull. It was an awkward place to stalk him, though there was plenty of cover; but the ice-crust was a terror, and every time I crunched through it a spasm of fear shot through my heart, so I was forced to make several long détours to get under the trees, where the snow was softer and more powdery.

The wind was blowing in strong gusts at times, and, barring the crust on the snow, circumstances were not unfavourable for a successful stalk. I had left my man some distance behind, out



I SPIED A BEAR STANDING OVER THE DEAD BULL

of the reach of any contrary eddies of wind, so had no apprehension on that score. After crawling on all fours for some distance in nearly a foot of snow, I found I had at last arrived within a measurable distance of the bear. The old rascal apparently did not suspect any danger, as he was fully occupied in sampling his recent acquisition, which, though only a temporary one, seemed to afford him a considerable amount of satisfaction, to judge by the peculiar grunts he made, but as yet he had not commenced to feed on it. On crawling a little nearer, say about ninety yards, I found myself in a very ticklish position amongst some snow-

covered juniper bushes, which were too high to shoot over, and with no place to shoot through, so I was obliged to attempt a nearer approach. Getting a couple of dead trees in line between me and the bear, I started off again, very gingerly. At one time I feared he had heard me, as my knee pressed on a small dead twig under the snow, and broke it in two; the bear turned suddenly round, and for some time kept his gaze fixed sternly and scrutinisingly in my direction, as if to say, 'What's that?' I did not dare to move, and in the most uncomfortable position lay watching him for fully ten minutes, apparently—though in

HE ROLLED COMPLETELY OVER BACKWARDS

reality perhaps not more than one, but it seemed as if he would never leave off looking my way. However, I got to the tree, which was barely fifty yards off, all right, and then found, to my disgust, a crust of frozen snow all down the side of the trunk, exposing a very slippery surface to rest my rifle against; but I was forced to make use of it, so, taking a firm grip of my weapon, I slowly raised it against the side of the tree, and just as the bear had turned his head in another direction for a moment, aimed and fired. The effect was magical and instantaneous. He first threw up his fore-paws into the air, lolling out his red tongue; he opened his foaming jaws, showing his great teeth, and madly

howled, causing the sharp frosty air to echo again and again with his savage 'huff, huff' and frantic growls of rage and pain. He then rolled completely over backwards, and away down a slope of the hill, where he stopped by the side of some fallen trees out of sight. I marked the spot, and quickly reloaded, after which I proceeded to the place, where an intricate mass of dead branches intermingled with gnarled old juniper bushes hid him from view. When I neared the spot, there seemed to be a great scramble going on amongst the dead branches in front of me—a heavy panting combined with a confusion of growls, but as yet I could discern nothing. In the distance I heard my man approaching, and with a wave of my hand I motioned him back. At length, on stepping slowly and cautiously forward, I caught sight of the bear: he saw me at the same instant; his eyes glared, he pricked up his ears, his mouth half open was dripping with blood and foam, and his powerful sides heaved with suppressed passion. As he was in the act of pushing forward his fore-paws with the evident intention of starting on the warpath, I took aim at the centre of his chest and fired. He fell forward dead on the spot, amongst rotten branches and decayed stumps of trees, without giving me any further trouble. This turned out to be a large female bear—seven or eight years old—but not nearly so big as the other one that had fought with the bull-elk, and which was probably a male. After we had taken off the skin, which was a very fine one, we left the carcases for the men to take to the house, where we arrived some hours later. Such was the luck that followed the death of the one-horned bull.

GOLF AND GOLFERS

BY H. S. C. EVERARD

BEFORE the golfer has polished up his irons for the ensuing season, now more or less in the offing, it may not be uninteresting to glance back at some of the principal events of 1898, during which period the career of one man, Harry Vardon, stands out so absolutely unique in the annals of golf. To him we shall return later. To discuss the comparative merits of heroes past and present is about as profitable a task as that enjoined by Michael Scot on his familiar spirit, whom he bade spin ropes of sand at Berwick bar; the spirit is still hard at it, as they say, and will probably finish his task when the above question is finally settled to everybody's satisfaction. But those who favour the arguments of the new school as against the old (who will admit nothing except that links have become easier) will point with considerable satisfaction to the unrivalled performances of the past year. Admitting too, as latter-day golfers must admit, that Musselburgh, say, and St. Andrews have become far less difficult than of old, they will argue that amongst the numerous courses, whose name is legion, now to be found in Great Britain and Ireland, there are some which for difficulty are at least the equals of the classic links in their most palmy days. Yet what happens when the best professionals exploit these courses? Why, Vardon will reel you off a 71 or a 72 as soon as look at you! And if it happens to blow a gale of wind, you will as likely as not find Taylor two or three strokes below 80, followed by three or four more about as many strokes above that score. No; there is no denying the fact that the successors of Agamemnon are a stalwart band, account for it how we may. Fitly enough, one of

them, Taylor, may be said to have inaugurated the '98 season. It was in February, about the end of that month, when he met Braid at Wimbledon. The two needed no formal introduction, for they had already met twice before; Taylor, in the very zenith of his reputation, having to content himself with a halved match the first time, and with a defeat by one hole on the second occasion; right well therefore he knew the manner of man with whom he had to deal. Braid, on account of his long driving, must always be a formidable opponent; Taylor's unrivalled accuracy with his iron clubs, on the other hand, very often more than neutralises any advantage that a very powerful driver may gain from the tee; and so it proved in this particular match, which Taylor won by three and two to play. The play, especially in the first round, was extraordinarily good. It is probably correct to say that a score of from 80 to 83 would be tolerably sure to win any scratch medal at Wimbledon nine times out of ten; yet Taylor and Braid, 'both the two of them,' to use the rather expressive pleonasm of the Scot, went round in 73, Taylor out in 37, home in 36; Braid out 38, home 35; the round was halved, but Taylor in the last half of the match was the steadier, and won as above stated. He is frequently in the habit of holing the Wimbledon Links in scores of from 71 to 75; to be two strokes only in excess of his record, and withal to do no more than halve a round, was perhaps a strange experience for him, and a striking illustration of the excellence of the play.

Later in the year the two met again, Taylor winning by two and one to play at Burnham, and halving at Bristol. Then came Braid's turn, who won by four and two to play at Barton-on-Sea, and by two at Enfield. This last match must have proved a rare treat for the fortunate spectators; for not only was the play exceptionally good, but during the whole day neither player was ever more than one up until the very last hole of the thirty-six. Taylor, with two 75's, equalled the record, which Braid broke with a 72. It thus appears that in five matches of 36 holes, each man won two, and one was halved; over the whole series of 180 holes (taking no account of byes), Braid stands one up; wherefore if any can say he knows two men who will make a better match, 'let him now speak, or else for ever hereafter hold his peace.'

Early in March, to the sincere regret of all golfers, the death occurred of the then holder of the Amateur Championship, Dr. A. J. T. Allan, at the early age of twenty-three. He had gallantly won his position at Muirfield, in a field which, it is

unnecessary to say, comprised all the talent of the day. All the more sad was his early death, from the fact that he had intended to devote his life to the alleviation of human suffering, and had already attained the first step of the ladder, had already compassed the beginning of what doubtless would have been a distinguished and honourable career.

The first of the Spring Meetings to attract attention was that of the Honourable Company at Muirfield, where all golfers were delighted to note the success of Mr. J. E. Laidlay, who for a considerable period had been, for him, decidedly 'off colour.' His score, in a strong wind, was 82; an excellent performance; nor did his play subsequently deteriorate, a chance remark of Sayers having worked this desirable transformation; as Polonius says:

> . . . and now remains
> That we find out the cause of this effect,
> Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
> For this effect defective comes by cause.

and the accomplished golfer is ever on the alert to profit by the smallest hint. Unfortunately Mr. Laidlay was subsequently prostrated by typhoid fever, and unable to take part in other competitions of the year which had opened under such good auspices.

Sayers and Archie Simpson, having thrown down the gauntlet to all and sundry for 100*l.*, were promptly taken up by Andrew Kirkaldy and Sandy Herd. The first half of the match was played in April, at Aberdeen, where the acceptors of the challenge finished with a lead of three holes; later, at St. Andrews, they completely overmastered their opponents, ultimately winning by twelve up and eleven to play. Kirkaldy throughout rendered yeoman service, his driving and putting being of the very best; nor indeed was Herd far behind him, while for the losers, Archie Simpson played an extremely plucky game under somewhat depressing circumstances.

From St. Andrews to North Devon is a far cry, but Westward Ho! was the scene of some extremely interesting play in April. Teams of fourteen aside, representing the Royal Liverpool and the Home Club, met in a 36-hole match. Although the four Hoylake cracks—Messrs John Ball, junr., Hilton, Charles Hutchings, and John Graham, junr.—all defeated their respective opponents, contributing 34 holes to their side, the team nevertheless was worsted, for North Devon won on the balance by 21 holes. Mr. Hilton gave evidence that he had in no

PROFESSIONAL FOURSOME. ANDREW KIRKALDY AND SANDY HERD *v.* ARCHIE SIMPSON AND BERNARD SAYERS

wise fallen from his high estate of 1897; for he won the Easter gold challenge medal, open to all clubs, with 79, no less than nine strokes lower than the next best score, 88, by Mr. John Ball, junr. Even with ten strokes added, Mr. Hilton's net score was the best. This wonderful round, it should be added, was played on a very bad day. Nor was this the limit of his successes, for next day, playing for the Kashmir Cup, his second round was the almost impossible one of 75; 39 out, 36 home. His aggregate was 157; his long-driving clubmate, Mr. John Graham, junior, being second, with 86+78=164.

Returning to St. Andrews for a glance at the Spring Meeting, we find at the head of the list a gentleman not unknown to fame, Mr. Leslie Balfour-Melville, who, like the brook, goes on for ever. If the aspirant to first-class honours wait, like the rustic, *dum defluat amnis*, till the tide of Mr. Balfour-Melville's successes ebb away, his vigil, methinks, is likely to be somewhat painful and protracted. Years ago the present writer ventured into the somewhat dangerous realms of prophecy, to the effect that this noted player would be found to occupy amongst amateurs the position held by Old Tom Morris amongst professionals, who, it may be recalled, won competitions after having passed the age of sixty. Events seem to point to something similar in the case of the amateur, so that even now the present Zadkiel is in a fair way of being justified of his words, for Mr. Balfour-Melville is going as strong as ever. Nothing over 80 is of much use nowadays, so far as first medals are concerned; hence Mr. Mure Fergusson, also an evergreen, had to be content with second, 83, to the winner's 80; Mr. F. G. Tait bracketed fifth with Captain W. H. Burn at 86.

'Blowing a gale; heavy hail and rain storms; weather the worst possible for golf;' such is the cheerful description of the surroundings on the first day of Hoylake Spring Meeting. The then open champion, however, maintained his reputation, and won with 88; Mr. C. E. Dick, 89; John Graham, junr., 90; Charles Hutchings, 91; Horace Hutchinson, 93. These scores bear out the description of the weather, for probably Mr. Hilton is quite annoyed if he fails to break 80. He did break it on the second day, and again won with 79. Messrs John Ball, Graham, and Hornby next with 82. Shortly afterwards, at Lytham and St. Anne's, now one of the longest courses in the kingdom, 6,248 yards, he was irresistible. In a fairly strong field, with 76+80 =156, he was twelve strokes better than the nearest competitor, Mr. C. E. Dick. Next day, in a handicap, he again returned,

curiously enough, with 76 and 80, an even more brilliant performance than before, inasmuch as the wind was very much stronger. It will be seen that these uninterrupted successes augured well for his chances in the Amateur and Open Championships.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, there was to take place one of those big professional matches which attract spectators in their thousands, and are of all entertainments the most disagreeable to watch, unless from a favoured position within the ropes. Mr. Jingle's method of finding his way through a crowd was by the infallible process of elbowing the countenances of its component members, but this procedure is better adapted to crowds which are stationary; a golfing crowd is always on the move, and besides, the faces of its component members are not as accessible as might be wished, less vulnerable points being usually presented for attack; by the time one has finished all the clapper-clawing necessary, the stroke, which we could not see, has been played, and away they go again.

Willie Park, junr., having thrown down the gauntlet, a challenge to anybody for 100*l.* a side was taken up by Willie Fernie, who was in the end severely beaten, and quite outclassed by Park's exceptionally brilliant performance. Park's four rounds at Musselburgh, where such a crowd as we have described assembled, were 39, 38, 36, 39 = 152; Fernie also did well with 159 (the score with which he won his championship there), but left for his home green seven holes in arrear. For many years at Troon he has been in the position of the strong man armed keeping his house, never defeated; but Park beat him there also, and won by thirteen up and twelve to play on the whole match, the last stroke of which was an approach shot which went into the hole, a four hole thus costing Park but two strokes. To his extraordinary putting, especially at Musselburgh, his victory was due, though his long game also was very powerful.

Never perhaps in the history of the Amateur Championship have there been so many matches of thrilling excitement as in that played at Hoylake in May, and in these the winner himself, Mr. F. G. Tait, figured in no small degree. So extraordinary was his run of luck, that he was popularly supposed, like the sorcerers of old, to have made a pact with Satan, to have had at his command some familiars, such as Bethor or Phaleg, who times and again performed for him the seemingly impossible. To begin with, Mr. Charles Hutchings might have beaten him; but only halved, and Mr. Tait with a fine four at the nineteenth

hole survived that danger. Next, what should have been *the* match of the meeting was a fiasco. Mr. Hilton, going round every day in one does not know how much below eighty, selected this one occasion to go off his game; bearing the burden of four previous defeats at Mr. Tait's hands, he crumpled up like a withered leaf, and did not win a single hole. Then Mr. Graham played better than Mr. Tait, except on the green, where some glamour always came over him—the familiars no doubt—and he could not hole a putt; indeed, missed one on the last green to halve the match, a putt of eighteen inches or two feet. Mr. J. L. Low was in reserve, who played like an angel—had the soldier dead beaten in point of fact—but the latter had moved Acheron to some purpose. Omitting several notable recoveries in the early part of the match, we note the end of it alone. Mr. Tait one down three to play. Driving to the sixteenth he was, 1, in a sandy ditch; 2, just out and no more, with a 'cop' close in front, and a carry of about 190 yards to reach the green; 3, he rose to the occasion, and 4, holed a long put and won the hole. The next two were halved, the nineteenth also; at the twentieth Mr. Low was stone dead, Mr. Tait, with a putt of five yards for a half, in it went; at the twenty-first Mr. Tait drove out of bounds, and was a full brassey shot distant from the green, upon which Mr. Low lay comfortably in three; with a surprising drive Mr. Tait lay dead, and secured another half, winning the match at the next hole, where Mr. Low missed a putt. It would require the mathematical capabilities of Mr. Tait's father to calculate the chances against all these recoveries coming off precisely when most needed; come off they did, however, and they enabled Mr. Tait to meet and vanquish Mr. Mure Fergusson in the final, by six and five to play. In the second round Mr. John Ball, junr., played a marvellous shot, characterised by Mr. Hilton as the finest stroke he has ever seen played at golf. Mr. W. E. Fairlie was dormy two upon him, lost the seventeenth hole, and was short of the bunker at the eighteenth in two. Mr. Ball, who had a wretched lie, took his brassey, and, with a carry of some 180 yards or so against the wind, reached the green, and won the hole. It would have been, says Mr. Hilton, an extraordinary shot even had the ball been teed. Winning the next hole, Mr. Ball entered the third round. He was ultimately beaten on his merits, as he allowed, by brilliant play on the part of Mr. James Robb; two and one to play was the margin; the young Scotsman had also defeated Mr. Horace Hutchinson by two, and this, although he had been two down and

five to play; with Mr. Mure Fergusson in the semi-final, he was all square and one to play, but lost the last hole. The survival of the fittest, therefore, disclosed the fact that the last four amateurs all hailed from the Land of Cakes, a much-needed consolation in view of the sore drubbings received later by the Scottish professionals at the hands of the brutal Saxon.

Shortly after this, Harry Vardon at Musselburgh laid the foundation of a series of successes hitherto unexampled in the history of the game, winning a tournament with 152. Mr. Tait continued in his lucky vein at Sandwich; all square and one to play with Mr. Mure Fergusson, each having gone out in 36, Mr. Tait was bunkered at the 36th hole, while his opponent was on the green. Far past the flag, and close up to the fence, Mr. Tait holed out a terrifically long putt, which won him the St. George's Vase with 84+79=163; Mr. Mure Fergusson 85+79=164 second. Mr. Horace Hutchinson also had a grand 79, made during the very worst of weather.

Never in the history of the Open Championship has such brilliancy been shown as at Prestwick, in June 1898, and by so many competitors. In 1893, the winning score was 322, made by William Auchterlonie, who by the irony of fate had on this occasion to retire, in accordance with a new regulation, by which competitors who are twenty strokes behind the leading score on the first day must perforce abandon all further claims. Eleven players returned scores better than 322, and if we accept Mr. A. H. Doleman's estimate of perfect play, viz.: 75 as the value of the 'par' round, then no less than five players had a round at that figure. Of these, Willie Park, junr., fresh from his 100*l.* victory over Fernie, was the hero of the first day, with the astonishing score of 76+75=151; what this means may appear more distinctly if we state that the spring and autumn medals of the Prestwick Club were won at 84 and 86 respectively; the medal scores then, if combined, would have only just managed to survive, by the narrow margin of one stroke, under the new rule just mentioned. To hole out in one stroke only over 'par' for 36 holes, has never before been done in a fair and square stroke competition, the nearest approach to it being in 1870, when young Tom Morris won his fourth championship with 149, against a 'par' of 147. Curiously enough Park began both his third and fourth rounds badly, and this just let in Vardon, who on the first day was three strokes behind; yet even so, at the end of the play, had Park holed a putt of three feet or so, he would have tied. It is impossible not to sympathise with Mr. Hilton, who most assuredly would have

JUBILEE VASE, ST. ANDREWS—SEMI-FINAL. MR. EDWARD BLACKWELL (PUTTING) *v.* MR. A. G. TAIT. THIS PAIR TIED THREE TIMES

won his third open championship, but for an 8 at the 5th hole, of which the value is but 3, or 4 at the outside. It is said he unaccountably took his cleek in lieu of his brassey, and was caught in the heartrending abysses of the Himalayas, where, had he even lifted and lost two strokes, he would still have tied with Vardon. In all his 72 holes, only twice does a 6 appear, and the gruesome 8 as aforesaid; his last round was 75. J. H. Taylor was as steady as old Time—78, 78, 77, 79; but just not quite brilliant enough; while Mr. Tait again was clothed with brilliancy as with a garment, but had preferably been garbed in more subfusc raiment, the steadiness of Taylor to wit. It is indeed a curious fact that, if we take the best holes played by the leading men, we find Mr. Tait at the top of the list with a selected round of 64; Mr. Hilton and Park 65 each, Vardon 68, and Taylor 70. Predictions that the Championship would be won in 318 were falsified by the result: Harry Vardon, 307; Park, 308; Mr. Hilton, 309; while 319 represented the last on the prize list.

Next day at the St. Nicholas Club, Prestwick, Vardon again headed the list with 150; Herd, second, 152. During the remainder of the season, his career was that of an Alexander the Great or a Napoleon; indeed he has been not inaptly termed the Napoleon of golf. We put into tabulated form his victories after he left Prestwick, his scores, and those of the runners up:—

Windermere . . .	140	Taylor . . .	142	
Norbury N. Surrey .	148	Braid . . .	151	
Carnoustie . . .	158	Herd . . .	161 [1]	
Elie (4 rounds) . .	300	Kay . . .	303	
Newcastle, co. Down .	Qualified in score, and won final by match play.			
Lytham and St. Anne's .	148	Herd . . .	159 each	
		Taylor . . .		
Manchester (18 holes) .	72	Herd . . .	77	
Barton-on-Sea (18 holes)	84	Herd . . .	87	

During this period he was once defeated, at Sheringham, where Taylor scored 157, Vardon 161. Attention must be called to the champion's play at Newcastle, co. Down, and at Lytham. In Ireland the other finalist was Taylor, who, although he played the first nine holes in 39, was no less than seven down, and, finishing in 82, was eleven down on the round, Vardon holing out in the incredibly low total of 71. These were the figures he afterwards put on record at Lytham, where the 'par' is given as

[1] In match play Vardon beat Fernie, Braid, and, in the final, Taylor.

75; seven times in his first round he holed in two from his approach. Now, wherein does the champion's superiority consist? It will be seen that many of his victories were won by a narrow enough margin, one or two strokes; but, evidently, he has something in his favour over and above the rest, for one can hardly ascribe such a series of successes to luck pure and simple. He drives a very long ball from the tee, but others seem to drive as far; it appears to the writer, so far as he can judge from one or two opportunities of watching Vardon's play, that he generally gains a very marked advantage from the great power of his second shot with a wooden club, which carries him so far that either he is on the green, or so close to it that he has a very short and easy pitch, while the others have an approach of forty or fifty yards or more. This in the course of a day's play must tell its own tale; especially as Vardon, once on the green, has such an unrivalled knowledge of strength, that time after time he lays his first putt within three inches of the hole, thus leaving himself far less than his due proportion of shortish, but withal missable, putts to hole out. As Jamie Anderson used to say, when play is really first class, there *is* no putting—and it is just these two points in 'Napoleon's' game that seem to set him on a higher level. Park, unfortunately, did not compete against him, except in the Championship; but it is satisfactory to learn that, after sundry bickerings, a match for a substantial stake has been arranged, which will be played at North Berwick and Ganton in the early summer. Vardon in September reduced the record of his home green from 67 to 66, 35 out, 31 home.

At the Royal and Ancient Autumn meeting, Mr. H. de Zoete, the Cambridge cricketer, leaped into sudden fame by winning the medal with a grand score of 80, made on a very bad day, when water was lying all over the Links. He followed this up next morning with 81, in a handicap scoring match.

Hoylake Autumn Meeting saw some magnificent play: Mr. John Ball, junr., 76 and 79; Mr. Hilton 77 and 74, each winning the medal on the first and second days respectively. Mr. Hilton's 74 is a record for medal returns, and ties with Braid's record. Mr. John Graham, junr., however, in the same week reduced this by a stroke, in a private match:

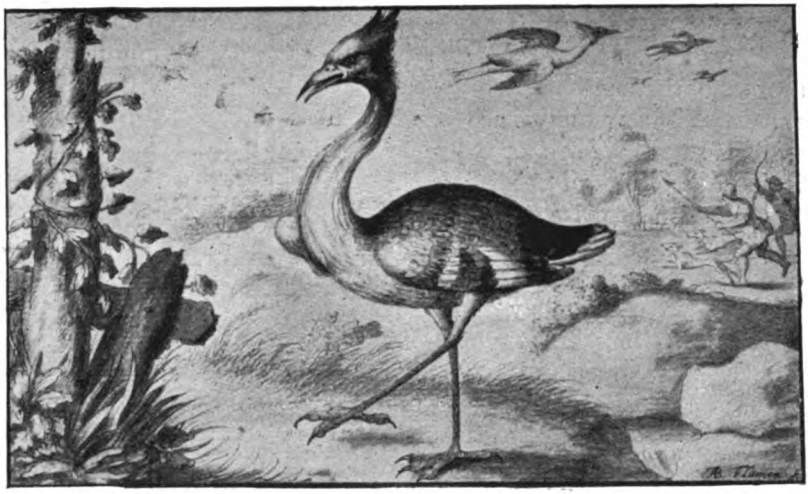
$$\left.\begin{array}{l}\text{Out: } 5\,4\,5\,3\,4\,3\,3\,5\,4 = 36\\ \text{Home: } 4\,3\,3\,3\,5\,5\,6\,4\,4 = 37\end{array}\right\} = 73$$

Mr. Hilton at Lytham and St. Anne's, in very bad weather, was not very far behind Vardon's sensational performance, if we make allowance for the day; $77 + 80 = 157$ was unapproachable.

Turning to other matters, the Rules of Golf Committee for some months have been engaged in an exhaustive revision of the rules. Golfing pundits are plied with as many conundrums as the correspondence editor of a popular journal: What is to be done if a dead worm, half in its hole, half out, is between your ball and the hole? If I drive my ball and impale it on a spike of barbed wire, must I play it or lose the hole? B's caddie jogs A's arm, causing him to miss a six-inch putt; what happens, (i) in match play, (ii) in medal play? I drove a very fine ball, but it was caught in a bunker; ought I not to be allowed to take it out and drop without penalty? Shade of Allan Robertson, what a question! All the lawgivers of history would be powerless to anticipate such queries as these, but it may be hoped that, if the revised code is adopted, much will be found clear that now is obscure, and that the phraseology is such as will allow the much-vexed ghost of Lindley Murray to abide in final peace.

The following, too, is a nice point. A golfer, his countenance wreathed in smiles betokening every appearance of satisfaction, addressed the writer thus: 'I say, I gave those fellows behind a bit of my tongue; we hadn't lost our ball, but we couldn't find it, and they drove into us.' Now it is stated in the 'Proverbial Philosophy' of Mr. Horace Hutchinson, that when you say of a thing 'It can't be lost,' what you really mean is, 'It can't be found,' and, doubtless, something of the sort happened here. But, with deference to one's amiable friend, it may be submitted that the average golfer acting on the spur of the moment, and possibly in his turn hustled by those behind him, would have some little difficulty in discriminating such a fine-drawn point. It would have delighted John Duns Scotus, the '*Doctor Subtilitatis*,' or William Occam, and those scholastic philosophers of the fourteenth century, who disputed as to how many angels could dance on the point of a needle.

Perhaps the writer may here suggest to his colleagues on the Revision Committee that they would do well to indicate the procedure appropriate in cases where a ball is not lost, but cannot be found; in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, and combined intelligence might formulate a rule satisfactory to all concerned.



THE MOONLIGHT TRIAL:

A STORY OF THE POONA PONY DERBY

BY MAJOR HAMYLTON FAIRLEIGH

In the Bombay Presidency there was no better judge of an 'Arab' than Captain Arthur Maddison, of the Ghorpurri Dragoons, who, seated on a bench at the stables of Abdul Karim, the famous horse-dealer, was conversing with that magnate, and watching with the keen appreciation of a connoisseur the movements of a remarkably handsome pair of ponies being trotted out for his inspection.

Which to select? It was a knotty point. Their action left nothing to be desired. So far as the eye could judge, there was not a pin to choose between them. Real beauties both; save for a white star on the forehead of one, lacked by the other, they were as like as two peas. In colour, burnt chestnut, with tawny manes and tails; the network of veins showing vividly through their delicate, glossy skins, indicated blood of a good stock. The small, game, staglike heads, the large mild eyes full of intelligence and latent fire, the proud, arching necks, the broad chests and muscular shoulders, the deep, rounded barrels, the powerful quarters, large hocks and clean, well-dropped legs, proved them to be no unworthy representatives of a long line of illustrious

ancestors. Of the pure Nejd race, their pedigrees, faithfully recorded, had been handed down as heirlooms by generations of sons of the desert.

Captain Maddison's experience as a judge of horseflesh had been acquired by a regular attendance, year after year, at the Bombay stables; and he had paid dearly for it. Each year, with the advent of the steamers bringing horses from Arabia for the Indian market, he would, moth-like, flutter back to the centre of attraction, where his wings had been so often singed. In the Poona Station Orders for October and November would regularly appear the following announcement: 'The undermentioned officer is granted ten days' leave of absence to Bombay. Captain A. Maddison, Ghorpurri Dragoons;' and his friends would remark smilingly, 'There's Maddison off again in quest of his equine wonder!'

Maddison's ill-luck at racing was notorious, and men had grown shy of backing any horse in which he was known to be interested. He had owned many good horses and ponies, yet, somehow or other, his colours had never been seen to the fore in any race really worth winning. His stable seemed to be visited by all the ills that horseflesh is heir to. His animals would break down in training, or else a rival would manage to bring out something just a wee bit better than his own. Nevertheless, undaunted by his misfortunes, Maddison would always return smiling to the scratch, ever ready to back his fancy, pinning his faith to that elusive phantom so dear to the imagination of racing men, the great 'coup' that he should some day pull off and thereby win back all his losings.

'Well, Sahib, what do you think of them?' asked Abdul Karim, after the ponies had been put through all their paces and were being walked quietly up and down.

'The handsomest pair I've ever seen,' answered Maddison, enthusiastically. He was always candid with Abdul Karim, as the two were old friends, and the Arab never tried to impose upon him. 'I should like much to buy them both; but,' in a regretful voice, 'I fear the price will be beyond my means, and I must content myself with one, if he is to be had on reasonable terms.'

'The owner will not sell them separately, as they are so well matched,' said Abdul Karim. 'The price he asks for the pair is two thousand rupees; but as you are an old customer, I think I could induce him to part with them for a trifle less. Take my advice, Sahib, and buy them. You will never regret your

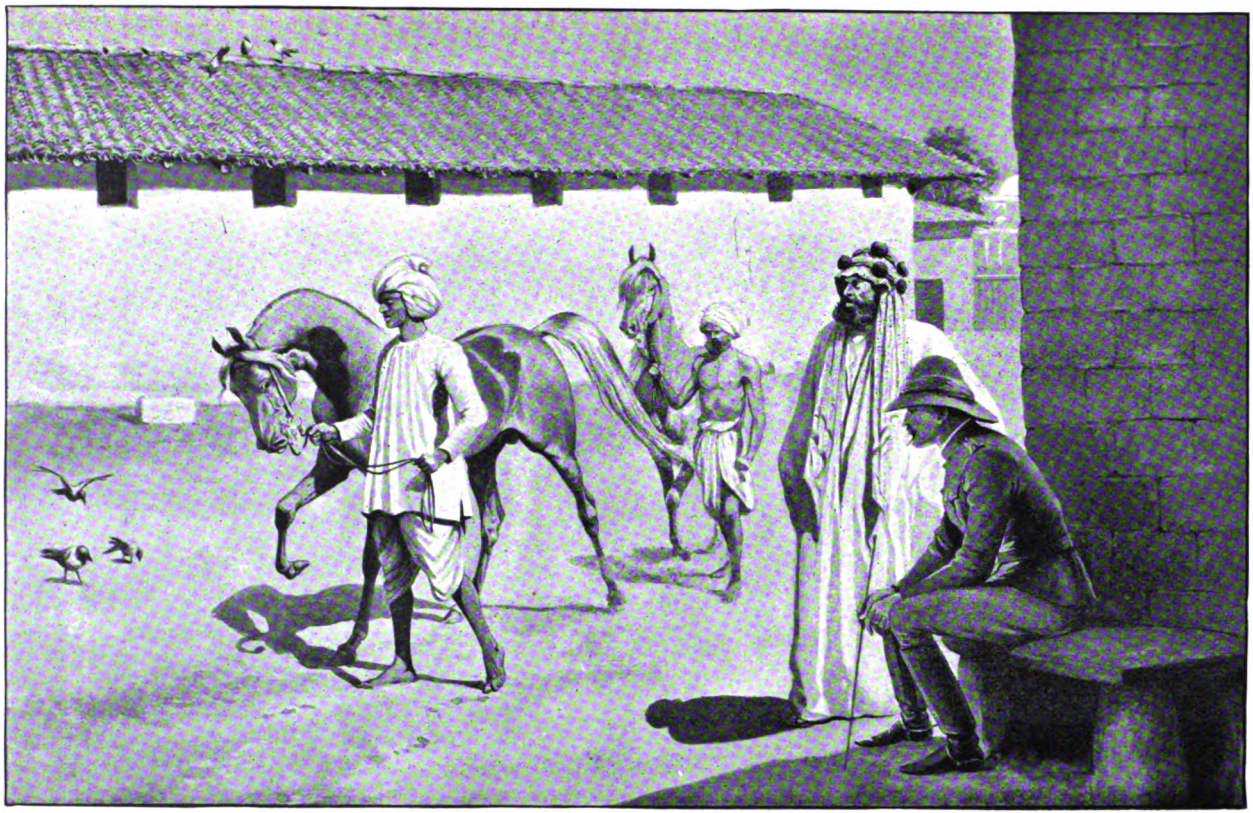
bargain. It is a chance of making up for your past ill-luck that may never occur again. There is a secret about these ponies which I don't mind confiding to you. They are half-brothers. The one without the star is as good as he looks, and is remarkable both for speed and endurance. Amber Cloud is the name given him by his Arab owner. The other pony, Starlight, though equally speedy, is not such a good stayer. The pair were tried thoroughly in Arabia, and it was found that, at any distance over three-quarters of a mile, Amber Cloud could beat Starlight easily. If you buy them both, you could easily sell Starlight for a good price, should you wish to do so.'

The temptation proved irresistible. After a little hesitation and some qualms of conscience, as he pondered on the embarrassed state of his finances and the danger of plunging deeper into the quagmire of debt, Maddison hardened his heart and closed with the offer. He comforted himself with the reflection that he was but following out the precepts of the good old adage, 'Nothing venture, nothing have;' and he was possessed of the gambler's superstition that, if he failed to back his luck when it came it would never return.

Maddison despatched the ponies to an old schoolfellow named Williams, an officer of the Nizam's police at Hyderabad, and a great sportsman, begging him to put them into training for three months and then try them a mile. The result proved the correctness of Abdul Karim's asseveration. Williams wrote that at the trial Amber Cloud had left Starlight standing still. 'Amber Cloud,' he continued, 'should prove a perfect gold mine to you; the pony is a real flyer, and, bar accidents, you have the Poona Pony Derby in the hollow of your palm. I advise you not to let him run in the meantime, but keep him for the big races at Poona in the autumn. As for Starlight, he is a good pony, too, with a rare turn of speed, but wants time. I should not be surprised if he won a race for you some day.' Williams proposed to keep both the ponies in the meantime in training at Hyderabad, to which Maddison assented.

Amber Cloud remained under Williams' care until August of that year, when Maddison, in order to personally supervise his final preparation for the great race, had him sent to Poona.

It soon leaked out that Maddison had a 'dark 'un' in training for the Pony Derby, and he had to submit to the usual amount of chaff from his brother officers. He bore it all good-humouredly, the most his tormentors could drag out of him in reply being, 'They laugh loudest who laugh last. Perhaps some of you



'WELL, SAHIB, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THEM?'

fellows will grin on the other side of your faces when settling day comes.' About Amber Cloud's form he kept resolutely silent. He had had so many disappointments previously, in some of which his friends had participated, that he was determined this time to stand or fall alone. If his pony should fail to perform the wonders expected of him, no one should be able to reproach him with having inveigled the unwary into risking their money in an unprofitable speculation.

Now there was at that time in Poona one of those private syndicates, a racing owners' union, the curse of the Indian Turf, known to the initiated as 'The Chor and Loocher Confederacy,' whose sole aim and object was to enrich themselves at the public expense by fair means or foul. Many of its members knew little about horses and cared less, regarding the noble animals merely as a means to an end, that of gaining money with the least possible trouble and risk to themselves. Hence it may be deduced that these gentry were not gifted with any too fine a perception of the delicate distinction between fair play and sharp practice. Maddison's persistent ill-luck may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that in the racing field it was with competitors of this stamp that he was obliged to contend.

'The Chor and Loocher Confederacy' disapproved strongly of the principles laid down in the second clause of the 'Rules on Betting,' 'You cannot win where you cannot lose.' What they did approve of was the 'Heads I win, tails you lose' system; which practice they had reduced to a fine art. Their method of procedure was simple. They owned a large stable of horses and ponies, whose relative form they of course knew accurately, and when starting three or four animals, purporting to belong to different owners, for each race, they understood which to back, while the public remained in the dark. The number of handicaps they won was surprising. If, however, for any important event there should be entered a dangerous candidate whose form was unknown to them, they would suggest to the owner the desirability of trying his horse against one of theirs, so as to obviate the possibility of a surprise. Native owners lent themselves readily to this species of device, only too glad of the opportunity of betting on a certainty. If the general public chose to back them 'stiff 'uns,' argued the Confederacy, 'more fools they, and they were rightly served for meddling with matters about which they knew nothing; while as for the bookmakers, whose hands, like those of the Somali, were against every man, and every man's hands against them, they, of course, were lawful prey.

During the present season, the 'Chor and Loocher' gang had

been exceptionally lucky, nearly all the best races of the year hitherto having been won by their stable. The Pony Derby they considered to be already within their grasp; for their champion, Fugleman, held an unbeaten record, whilst Clarionet, their second string, had also proved himself capable of great things. The reports brought to them by their touts of the fine form displayed in his exercise gallops by Amber Cloud caused them some uneasiness, to dispel which they decided to ask Maddison to consent to a trial between his pony and Fugleman, over a mile, the distance of the race. The leading members of the gang, after a careful consultation, deputed Glibly, a sporting lawyer, one of the most unscrupulous of their adherents, to approach Maddison on the subject. Maddison, turning a deaf ear to the specious arguments adduced by this wily tempter, declined firmly to accede to his request, declaring in plain terms that he disapproved of sharp practice, and that he regarded the proposal as little short of an insult. The temptation was certainly a strong one. There could be no question of the advantage to be derived from a trial, since Glibly had informed him that he had the best reasons for knowing that Fugleman held all the competitors in the Poona Derby safe, with the solitary exception of Amber Cloud. To back the winner of the trial, therefore, would be to bet with an almost absolute certainty of winning.

The 'Chor and Loocher Confederacy' resented deeply Maddison's refusal to become a party to their nefarious project, and, while vowing vengeance, were resolved, since they had failed to attain their object by direct means, to compass it by foul. Amber Cloud's stable was in Maddison's compound in the cavalry lines at Ghorpurri, and was not easy of access, for it was watched jealously by day by a trooper orderly, while at night Doorga, the Padesi syce, slept in the verandah across the entrance. The pony was ridden in his training gallops by Maddison's riding boy, a brother of the orderly.

The Confederacy were of opinion that to offer a bribe to either the orderly or his brother would be too dangerous an experiment, and they determined therefore to square the syce. Had they but known it, they could not have selected a more unpromising instrument for the execution of their design. Maddison had saved Doorga's life in the Afghan War; the faithful fellow, ever mindful of his debt of gratitude, worshipped his master with a blind devotion, and would have made any sacrifice for his sake. Doorga, knowing how much depended on the result of the Pony Derby, was deeply interested in the

welfare of Amber Cloud, and tended his charge with unwearying vigilance and unflagging zeal.

Maddison, after his interview with Glibly, suspecting that an attempt might be made to 'nobble' the pony or to get at him in some way, had warned Doorga to be on his guard. Consequently Doorga was not surprised when a stranger, a caste fellow of his own, whose acquaintance he had made a few days previously in the bazaar, and who had seemed suspiciously anxious to make friends with him, broached the subject of a trial, promising him a handsome reward if he would bring Amber Cloud to the race-course on a night to be fixed thereafter. Doorga asking for time to consider the matter, returned home and informed his master.

'The scoundrels!' muttered Maddison, angrily, 'I thought they'd be up to some devilry, but hardly expected to have my suspicions so soon confirmed. I wish I could lay hold of them and get them prosecuted for bribery. But they are too crafty for that. This affair is being conducted through native agency, and the names of the real culprits would never transpire. They shall be paid back in their own coin,' he exclaimed suddenly; 'hoist with their own petard. Since they are so anxious for a trial, they shall have one, but not the trial they want. *Starlight* shall run against Fugleman, and they will think he is Amber Cloud. That will be a joke. They will be playing my game instead of their own, for the trial will give me an accurate indication of the relative form of Amber Cloud and Fugleman.'

Doorga, on being informed of the plan, chuckled with delight at the prospect of checkmating the Sahib's enemies, and pocketing at the same time a handsome sum; for the Confederacy's emissary had promised to give him fifty rupees immediately before the trial, and another fifty on its conclusion. Maddison next wired to Williams at Hyderabad, directing him to send Starlight by rail to Khirkee, where he arranged for his reception by Douglas, one of the Governor's aides-de-camp, who promised to have him stabled at Ganesh Khind. Starlight arrived safely the following day. Maddison communicated his scheme to Douglas, who entered thoroughly into the joke and promised his assistance. With the aid of a paint-brush and some brown paint, the star on the new arrival's forehead having been obliterated, he remained an exact counterpart of Amber Cloud. The same night a change of quarters was effected, Amber Cloud being removed to Ganesh Khind, and Starlight replacing him at Ghorpurri.

The Confederacy laid their plans with considerable forethought, fixing for the trial the night of the Gunners' Ball, to which everyone in Poona had been invited, and at which, they

calculated, Maddison would certainly be present. There should be little fear of interruption on such an occasion. At about ten o'clock on the night in question, Starlight, closely muffled and hooded, was led by Doorga through byways to the Poona racecourse. Arrived there, he was swiftly stripped and saddled under the superintendence of the strange Padesi. The Padesi, after giving the English jockey deputed to ride a leg-up, slipped a bundle of five-rupee notes into Doorga's hands, and tapping significantly the handle of a knife that hung at his girdle, warned him to keep a discreet tongue in his head. Fugleman, ridden also by an English jockey, now emerged from the gloom, and joining his rival moved slowly towards the racecourse. The moon, which had been hitherto concealed behind the clouds, came suddenly out and shed a flood of yellow light over the scene, illuminating brightly the racecourse, the parade-ground, and the white cantonment roads. Save a belated Mahratta villager trudging wearily along the Sholapore road, not a soul was stirring in the vicinity. The silence of the night was unbroken except by the chatter of the flying foxes and the occasional howl of a pariah dog.

Fugleman was a light grey, almost white; so the pair as they trotted round to the starting-post were easily distinguishable in the bright moonlight. On the race-stand were Harvey and Jackson, stop-watches in hand, straining their eyes eagerly to catch the starter's signal. At last the flash of a bull's lantern warned them that the trial had begun. Just as the ponies started, the moon became partially obscured by a passing cloud. Their two figures could be discerned close together, but in the dim light it was impossible to make out which was leading. When they entered the straight the grey had slightly the best of it, but the chestnut stuck gamely to his quarters and made a gallant struggle for the lead, and it was only after a ding-dong finish that Fugleman, all out, passed the judge's box a length in front of his opponent.

'Too close to be pleasant,' remarked Harvey to his companion. 'There was not more than seven pounds between them. But with Smithers up on Fugleman, that means another seven pounds in favour of our nag; for I know that Meer Kassim is to ride Amber Cloud in the race. Bar accidents, we can't lose.' Curiously enough the simple Mahratta villager, who chanced to pass the stand in time to witness the finish, came to an exactly opposite conclusion.

'Capital,' said he to himself in excellent English. 'Amber Cloud has at least a stone in hand. The biters will be bit this journey. I think I've got them on toast.'

. . . . . .

THE PADESI SLIPPED A BUNDLE OF FIVE-RUPEE NOTES IN DOORGA'S HANDS

At the lotteries which were held the evening before the race, Fugleman was made a hot favourite, Maddison making a point of bidding him up, though he had not the least intention of buying him. He was eventually knocked down to the Confederacy for fifteen hundred rupees.

'I believe that beggar Maddison must have got wind of the trial,' said Harvey to his confederates, 'or he would not have been so precious anxious to back our nag. We've had to pay a deuced stiff price for our chance, but it's merely putting our money down to pick it up again.'

Amber Cloud was sold to his owner for sixty rupees, no one caring to risk much money on him, after noting the high bids made by Maddison for Fugleman. The remaining ponies fetched moderate prices only, the race being regarded as a foregone conclusion for the Confederacy's champion.

On the following afternoon the grand stand was densely packed with spectators, the gay toilets of the ladies and the rich costumes of the native chiefs making a brave show. The stand enclosure and the betting ring were also crowded, while there was a constant flow of visitors to the paddock, where the competitors for each race were paraded for inspection. On two sides of the ring were the stalls of the bookmakers, and these gentry were now doing a brisk business with the crowd of eager backers struggling and jostling to get a good view of the betting lists.

The Poona Derby, the great event of the day, was about to be run off, and no sooner had the numbers of the competitors been signalled on the board than there was a fierce rush to 'get on' the favourite, for the whisper had spread abroad that it was 'Lombard Street to a China orange' on Fugleman. There were only seven starters—an unusually small number for the Poona Derby, for many owners had scratched their ponies at the last moment, deeming their chance of success against the Confederacy's representative quite hopeless.

At the outset even money was to be had about Fugleman, but he rose swiftly in the betting till backers were obliged to lay 3 to 1 on, at which price he found no lack of supporters. Against the remaining competitors the odds varied from 6 to 1 to 12 to 1. Amber Cloud was quoted at twelves, but no one was venturesome enough to back him--yet. Maddison was patiently awaiting the opportunity which he knew would come.

And now the ponies emerged from the paddock and filed past the stand, preparatory to the preliminary canter. Fugleman, ridden by Smithers, wearing the Confederacy's colours, magpie jacket, black cap, resembled in size an officer's charger rather

than a 13 hands 3 inches pony, and by his enormous stature quite dwarfed his diminutive opponents. The first to turn, he came tearing down the course with long raking stride, all fire and ardour, reaching and pulling at his bit, and giving his jockey as much as he could do to control him, looking, as his admirers declared, a winner all over. The backers of the favourite were so delighted with the appearance of their idol that they paid but little attention to the remainder of the field. When Amber Cloud, with Meer Kassim, the famous Mahomedan jockey, up, colours, green jacket and cap, lolloped lazily past, looking as if he had never been in a hurry in his life, no comment was passed upon him except by a young lady, who remarked in compassionate tones to Douglas, the aide-de-camp, who was standing beside her—

'What a pretty creature! What a lovely mane and tail he has! But the poor little thing looks as if he was half asleep. It is a shame, I declare, to take him out of his comfortable stable, and make him run against a great big horse like Fugleman. Captain Maddison ought to have had more sense.'

'I shouldn't be surprised if the poor little thing were to wake up before the end of the race; and if he beats Fugleman, I will make you a present of a dozen pairs of gloves—that is, if I can find any small enough to fit you,' answered her companion, gallantly.

'Oh, how kind of you, Captain Douglas!' replied the girl, clapping her hands delightedly; 'that will be nice. Now I shall be very much interested in the result of the race.'

The ponies had nearly reached the starting post, and still Maddison gave no sign. At last, Bowman, the Leviathan book-maker, disgusted at the slackness of business, roared out in a stentorian voice, 'Back your fancy, gents! Favourites don't always win, or I shouldn't be here. Any price outsiders, twenty to one, bar three. Two thousand to a hundred; twenty thousand to a thousand against Sunflower, Marmion, Lancer, or Amber Cloud.'

The words had scarcely left his lips when a voice at his elbow remarked quietly, 'Done with you; Amber Cloud; a thousand rupees to twenty thousand,' and the bet was duly recorded in the name of Captain Maddison.

At this moment a deep murmur from the crowd, a vigorous ringing of the bell, a simultaneous turning of every face towards the starting-post, announced that the great race had begun. A magpie jacket was seen immediately to shoot to the front and to take a strong lead of several lengths.

'Why, what the deuce is Smithers about?' exclaimed in

disgusted tones one of Fugleman's backers, an old racegoer. 'I never saw him make such a fool of himself before. He'll strangle the pony before they're halfway round.' He was reassured when a friend beside him, with a race-glass, said: 'It's all right. It's Clarionet, the Confederacy's second string, making the running. A fast-run race will suit Fugleman.'

The speaker was right. Ere the half-mile post was reached, Clarionet, having done what he was wanted to do, took a back place for the remainder of the performance, leaving the principal part to be enacted by his stable companion. The pace was indeed a cracker; so hot was it, that at the bend for home, there were only two ponies left in the race, the remainder of the field having been completely spread-eagled. On entering the straight, Fugleman and Amber Cloud were racing neck and neck with each other, the issue of the struggle reduced to a duel between the favourite and the outsider. The members of the Confederacy now expected to see a repetition of the dress rehearsal performed at the moonlight trial. It was a moment of intense excitement for backers who, almost to a man, had dashed on the favourite. Smithers, while becoming disagreeably aware that his mount was tiring at every stride, noticed with surprise and alarm that his antagonist was full of running. The parts played at the trial were, in some inexplicable manner, being reversed. The pace had told on Fugleman more heavily than had been expected. The pair were rapidly nearing the winning post, and were still running locked together, not a nose between them. Smithers, feeling the case to be desperate, sought to intimidate Meer Kassim by volleys of abuse; but the Mahomedan, without changing a muscle, sat as still as a mouse in the saddle, paying no heed to the objurgations of his opponent. Smithers next tried a very old dodge, which he had found to pay sometimes with inexperienced jockeys. Lifting his whip he began to thrash his boot vigorously, hoping to induce Meer Kassim to flog Amber Cloud and thereby throw him out of his stride. The Mahomedan, however, was far too wary a bird to be taken by chaff of that kind—not undeservedly had he been dubbed the 'Fordham of India.' He was as good a judge of pace as was Smithers himself, and he knew that he had the race in hand. Nevertheless, he was resolved not to expose Amber Cloud's form by winning too easily; and it was not till within a few lengths of the judge's box that, by a slight pressure of the legs, he caused the chestnut to forge ahead, winning the Pony Derby by half a length, one of the most exciting ever witnessed on the Poona Racecourse.

TROUT FISHING ON THE NIPIGON

BY HON. J. N. KIRCHHOFFER

Do you know the blackened timber—do you know that racing stream
With the raw, right-angled log-jam at the end;
And the bar of sun-warmed shingle, where a man may bask and dream
To the click of shod canoe-poles round the bend?
It is there that we are going, with our rods and reels and traces,
To a silent, smoky Indian that we know—
To a couch of new-pulled hemlock, with the starlight on our faces,
For the Red Gods call us out and we must go!
We must go—go—away from here, &c.

The Feet of the Young Men—RUDYARD KIPLING.

I NOW know from actual experience that the Nipigon is the finest trout-fishing river in America. But far back in the long-ago years, ere yet my good luck had taken me into that neighbourhood, we used to smile with incredulity at the rumours, which even then began to be bruited abroad among the nations, of prodigious speckled trout—and lots of them—in that stream. 'Two-pounders galore,' men said in those days, when amongst us a trout of 1 lb. was thought to be no small potatoes; '3-pounders in great plenty; 4-pounders often; 5-pounders not seldom; 6-pounders occasionally;' and here the courage of the narrator generally began to waver. But he would resume:

'I know a man who fished there.'

'And caught 6-pounders?'

'Yes, and 7-pounders.'

'Thunder! this beats the eleven men in buckram grown out of two. Seven-pound speckled trout?'

'Yes. Speckled trout.'

'Brook trout?'

'Yes. Just the same fish, only bigger.'

'Seven-pound brook trout? Well, I *have* heard fish stories, but this takes the jack-knife!'

'All I know about it is that Smiff is a trustworthy man. He was there, and he told me so.'

'Then I'll send the jack-knife to Smiff.'

Such was the tenor of many of our conversations on the great subject of trout twenty years ago. But 'vidth and visdom grows together, Samivel,' and at fifty or 'by 'r Lady, inclining to three score,' the irrational incredulity of twenty years ago has quite passed away. One knows that Smiff, having been an angler, was a truthful man. One has learned that there are greater trout on earth than were dreamed of in our young philosophy, and perhaps one has gone a-fishing on the Nipigon himself. Seven-pounders quotha! Why, they will tell you tales of speckled trout taken in those ice-cold waters of 10 lb. in weight! At this distance, one may say without rashness that a speckled trout of over 10 lb. is a *very* large fish. Two hundred dollars was offered some years ago by an American millionaire for a genuine 10-pounder. The offer still stands, we are told by the Hudson's Bay Co.'s agent at Red Rock. It has been whispered to and fro from Red Rock to James Bay in all fashions of the Ojibway dialect, and yet the American millionaire still has his (presumably ill-gotten) 200 dollars in the bank. As, notwithstanding the entire veracity which distinguishes anglers above other individuals, one finds a shade of difficulty in getting a lot of simple 4- and 5-pounders accepted at a moment's notice, it may be well at this point to give some authentic information about the weight of Nipigon trout. At the Hudson's Bay post at Red Rock, one quarter of a mile from Nipigon station, Mr. Flanagan, Hudson's Bay Co.'s agent and fishing inspector, used to keep a record of fishing parties since 1874, and 'catches of largest trout' since 1880. In that year a party of three rods from Sault St. Marie, took 500 fish averaging 3 lb. each. An Ohio party of six rods took 320 fish weighing 900 lb., largest 6½ lb.

In 1881 Mr. Maitland of Edinburgh and his wife in seven weeks took 295 trout, average 2½ lb., largest 6½ lb. From July 6 to 17 Messrs. Heath and Delunge of Toronto, with three Arntons of Montreal, took 134 trout averaging 2½ lb., largest 5½ lb. From July 18 to August 7 four Cincinnati rods took 300 trout, average 3 lb., largest 6 lb. Eight Ohio men, from August 7 to 19, took 100 trout, average 2¾ lb., largest 6¼ lb. From August 9 to 15 four Rock Island rods took 76 trout, average 1¾ lb., largest 6 1/16 lb., which seems particularly trustworthy owing to the accuracy with which

the $\frac{1}{16}$ lb. is recorded. From August 27 to September 2 L. R. O'Brien and George A. Mackenzie of Toronto took 76 fish weighing 171 lb., largest 5 lb.

In 1882 forty-eight rods were in the river. The largest trout taken weighed $6\frac{10}{16}$ lb., the next 6 lb., the third $5\frac{1}{2}$ lb.—all these by American parties.

In 1883 the Bishop of Georgia took a $6\frac{1}{2}$-pounder; fifty-seven rods were on the river, and the tally of 'largest' showed, besides the big fish of the Apostolic Successor, one fish of $6\frac{1}{2}$ lb., one of 6 lb., one of $5\frac{3}{4}$ lb., four of $5\frac{1}{2}$ lb., three of $5\frac{1}{4}$ lb., six of 5 lb., and three of $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

In 1884 the Church again beat the record—Rev. Canon Mackay having taken on August 17 forty trout in eleven hours, including one of 6 lb. and two of 4 lb. Mr. J. G. A. Creighton and wife, of Ottawa, in fourteen days took 364 trout, including one of $6\frac{1}{2}$ lb., two over 6 lb., one of $5\frac{1}{2}$ lb., and two of 5 lb.

In 1885 sixty-four rods fished the stream. This year 7-pounders were first recorded by a perfectly trustworthy Pennsylvania party of two rods. Between August 12 and 21 they took one of $7\frac{1}{2}$ lb. and one of $7\frac{1}{4}$ lb. Two trout of over 6 lb. were caught by other parties, and a large number over 5 lb.

In 1886 a party of four rods, including Mr. W. D. Matthews, President of the Toronto Board of Trade, are reported as having taken in thirteen days 243 trout, including one of $7\frac{1}{2}$ lb., two of 7 lb., one of 6 lb., sixteen of 5 lb., twenty-six of 4 lb. and sixty-four of 3 lb. This dwarfs into insignificance almost all the other catches of the year, though several of over 6 lb. are recorded. Since that date there is rarely a season that trout over 7 lb. are not reported.

Now, where, some of my readers will ask, is Nipigon? It is on the north shore of Lake Superior, on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, about a day and a half's journey from Montreal or Toronto. That no time may be lost, it would be well for the incoming angler to arrange beforehand for his guides and supplies to be in readiness on the arrival of the train. This can be done at a day's notice, by corresponding with the agent of the Hudson's Bay Co. at this point. He makes a specialty of outfitting parties going up stream.

On August 15, 1891, Harry Munn and the writer took the train east from Port Arthur to reach Nipigon at 7 P.M. A large party of Americans had come across from Duluth on the boat that morning to spend a week up the river. There were six gentlemen and eight ladies, including one very pretty girl, and

they had supplies with them which included every delicacy you could ask for in a first-class hotel. They had eight canoes and sixteen Indian guides. Of course, it took a considerable time the next morning to get such a party under weigh, but we, too, soon had our little outfit ready. Métis, or Indians well acquainted with the river, are a necessity even to visitors experienced in the canoe navigation of swift streams. The Nipigon is a very much broken and rapid river, falling over 300 feet in some forty miles by many rapids and currents, none of any great descent. A fall of ten inches in a mile makes a swift current, so you may know! We had Charley de la Ronde as boss and steersman, at two dollars a day, with a young half-breed, Joe, at a dollar and a half, in the bow, and about 7 A.M. we started with these two in a bark canoe about twenty feet long, our tent and camp equipage (hired at small expense from the Company) and our eatables occupying with ourselves the centre of the boat. Passing underneath the C. P. R. bridge which spans the gorge at a great height, we hurried on through Lake Helen, a lovely body of water some six miles long by a mile in width. Then, branching into the river channel, we pushed forward against the swift current until at noon we caught sight of the white breakers of the current that runs past Camp Alexander. Here we stopped for lunch, and while our guides were preparing the meal we quickly put our rods together, and prepared to take our first cast in the very trouty-looking water. 'Not much use,' said Charley; 'too much fished here and sun too hot.' Nevertheless about the third cast my companion rose and hooked a fine fish. In that roaring and tumbling water he gave great play of the steady dragging sort, keeping all the time in the heavy rapid, till after about fifteen minutes his strength failed and Charley was able to pass the net under a beautiful fish. How much did he weigh? Well, while in play we had estimated him at perhaps 5 lb., certainly 4 lb., but he only pulled down the scale at 2¾ lb. However, here was a good beginning, and the guides quickly had him cleaned, rolled in oatmeal, and on to the pan. We rose one or two more without result, but soon were called to lunch. How delicious was this our first taste of the Nipigon trout, fresh from those icy depths, and cooked as only these Indian guides seem to know how to do it! But we did not linger long over this meal. We decided to camp here for the night, and at two o'clock embarked again, crossed the long reach above the rapid, landed, and set off across the country to Cameron's Pool.

John Burroughs, in his 'Locusts and Wild Honey,' says that

there is a good deal more written on the back of the speckled trout than affords pleasure. When a man is beginning to be of weight to understand with Sir John Falstaff that 'eight yards of uneven ground' may really have been 'three score and ten miles a foot,' he is very apt to sit down and take a rest on the highest hill that one crosses on the way to Cameron's Pool. What a frightful piece of water that is! The winding path cuts across a great curve of the river till, after a tramp of about half a league, you reach the edge of a wide circular pool—if pool it can be called—where all is roar and turmoil and white breakers and heaving waters and yell and groan. From the north the river tumbles with rushes of spray some twenty-five feet over a succession of ledges, and pours straight across the diameter of the circle in mighty rollers that fall away to smooth swiftness only when they almost touch the farther shore. There the current divides. Half the volume runs down river to another leap, the white crest of which you see in the distance. The other half races back in a wild eddy, whose current sets close in shore and runs madly back into the raging angle at the foot of the fall. Within the surging rim of this maelström the water heaves and falls with tumultuous and convulsive motion. Around the circle is no place where one could wade out five yards without being whirled away and given to the furies of the mid-current to be bruised and torn upon the rocks beneath this demoniac 'pool.'

Cameron's Pool may possibly seem a less dreadful place to one who has good luck there. Ours was poor. Though we saw several large fish rise at our flies, they all refused to take hold. From point to point we moved, and still the tale was the same. Jock Scott was no more taking than Fairy, Silver Doctor as unsuccessful as Turkey wing. At last Charlie picked up a most dilapidated remnant of a minnow from the beach and passed my fly hook tenderly through it. I gave a cast into the boiling waters. In a moment it was swallowed and a huge fish was tearing out into the heaviest of the turbulent water; whence, after a hard fight, he was gradually extricated, and in fifteen minutes passed into the net. Here, indeed, was one of the fish we had read of, and talked and dreamed about. He pulled down the scale at 5 lb. plump. Without delay Charley cut two strips out of this trout's belly, and in less than five minutes Munn and I were each fast in fish which, though less than half the size of this first monster, gave excellent sport. But there our success ended. We hooked several others, but lost them in the tremendous pull of the current, till, not wishing to be caught on the trail by dark-

LURED OUT OF THE CURRENT INTO A LITTLE BAY

ness, we reeled up and returned to camp, where we took a delicious revenge for the bad day upon the trout thereof. Broiled Indian fashion, *i.e.* skewered on the end of a pole and toasted before your fire, these fish, red fleshed and fat, are, I dare say, equal to anything set before the guests of Lucullus.

Next morning we got out at five o'clock to find Charley with tea and trout ready cooked, and having packed our traps, crossed the rapid and began the Long Portage. A path, well worn by many generations of the Hudson's Bay Co. packers, leads one for a couple of miles over rocks and stones, up hill and through gorges. Over this the guides in successive journeys carry first your canoe, then the camp equipage and other outfit, so that it was high noon before we had got across and lunched. Here we met two Chicago gentlemen on their way home. 'Fly-fishing very poor,' they said, 'but lots of fish to be taken with bait, spoon, or phantom minnow.' Now, instead of pushing onward up through Lake Jessie, we dropped down the stream to where a rocky wooded island divided the river in two. Leaving Munn anchored in the canoe to fish the western stream, I crossed the little island to try the boiling rapid on the east. My companion rose a large fish with his first cast, and hooked him at the second throw. My very first throw secured a fine fish, which, after some coaxing, I lured out of the current into a little bay, where Charley, up to his knees in water, speedily had him in the net. He weighed $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Turning to look at my companion, I found him still engaged; so, standing on my rocky point overhanging the torrent, I made another cast. It seemed as though the whole river boiled up with trout, and I found I had three fish hooked. One of these Charley lost in the attempt to get him into the net, but two were secured. These, weighing only $1\frac{1}{8}$ lb. and $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb., were returned to the river. It was, as usual, the biggest one that got off. Just as I was preparing to cast again, a fine fish broke clear of the water about twenty feet away. Immediately I cast over him. He was up in an instant, rose fully two feet out of the water, and missed. Again I dropped the flies and again he came swiftly, this time to his fate. Away he went for the fall, some hundred feet below, but turned under the drag of the reel and ran straight up stream again. What need to describe his play? He weighed $4\frac{1}{4}$ lb., and for vim and speed and changeful tactics, he was the liveliest fish I met on the river. It was quite evident now that fly-fishing had commenced in real earnest. For two hours my partner and I were constantly in fish, and though many fine ones were lost and small fish returned, we

had a good show left. Suddenly my rocky haunt was invaded by three of the young ladies of the Duluth party, who, without the slightest hesitation, all began to cast together off the rock. I at once laid down my rod, but their lines were speedily entangled, and it took some time to get them straightened out. While this was being done a good fish rose almost out of reach. After vain attempts to cast after him, one of the girls deliberately slid down over the edge of the rock into the foaming water, and holding on by the roots and branches underneath, scrambled on to a projecting point, from which she cast her flies in triumph, and promptly hooked the fish. Then there was excitement, screams and instructions were given by the other girls and by some of the gentlemen of the party who had come up, during all which time the young lady hung on to her fish, till presently Charley, seeing an opportunity, cleverly ran the net under a nice trout of 3 lb. Needless to say, however, the water had not been improved by the excitement, and but one other small fish rewarded the efforts of the party. By joining our catch with theirs, however, we had ample supply for the whole party, large as it was. Our camps were side by side. Their party contained some excellent musicians and good singers, and it was late before the 'lights out' was sounded.

Next morning we started soon after daylight, and ran to Split Rock, some two miles. Here there is a portage a quarter of a mile long. A mile and a quarter above there is another portage of fifty yards, and from there a run of a mile or so takes one to Pine Portage, at the foot of which we went into camp, and there remained till the homeward journey began, fishing there that forenoon. Our catch here was of much larger fish. Putting back into the water all that did not seem as large as the 2½-pounder with which my friend commenced the fun, we returned to shore at the end of two hours with ten fish of the following weights: two of 2½ lb., two of 2⅝ lb., two of 2⅞ lb., two of 3¼ lb., one of 4 lb., one of 4⅞ lb., one of 5 lb.

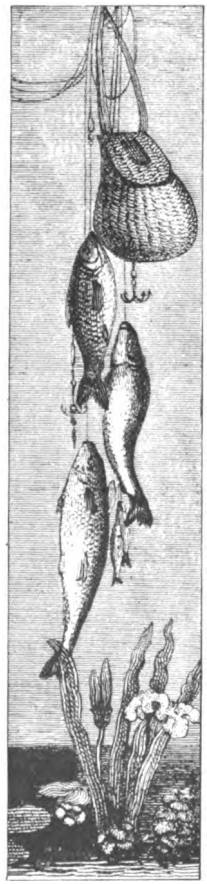
In the noonday sunlight no trout rose at the fly, but they took a spoon or a minnow, or a piece of fat pork which Charley put upon his hook. But in the evening, just as the last glint of the sunshine fell athwart the tall tree tops on the river, Charley anchored us in the middle of the Pine Portage current, and at once the fun began. My book of the catch shows as taken in an hour—for we were out for an hour only—two of 1¼ lb., three of 1½ lb., four of 2¼ lb., three of 2½ lb., two of 3 lb., and one of 3¾ lb., besides those that were lost and smaller ones returned to the

THEIR LINES WERE SPEEDILY ENTANGLED

river. The largest fish were taken on the Jock Scott and Silver Doctor. The trout, when hooked, generally ran straight up stream for fifty or sixty feet, making the best of the strong current. But there is too much dead pull about it to compare, in my mind, with some smaller trout in lighter streams. That evening the Duluth party camped at the upper end of the portage, and their enormous retinue soon absorbed all the trout that we could spare.

The next day was a specimen day on the Nipigon—trout rising freely everywhere, beautiful weather, and we with nothing to do but fish, eat, sleep, read, or lounge. By a quarter to five we had finished an early breakfast, and were well away on the path to Hamilton's Pool. The pool proper is not unlike Cameron's Pool in shape and general aspect, though a much less dreadful body of hurrying water. A little above where the river enters there are two small islands. At the point opposite the foot of the lower, my companion made his first cast, and was instantly engaged. A little lower down I secured one good fish of 3 lb., and almost immediately afterwards a double catch of 2¼ lb. and 2½ lb. By the time I had mastered this lot, Munn had taken I do not know how many more. In fact, 'he lost count, and outgrabe in despair,' in trying to keep track of them; but by nine o'clock, when Charley called us to breakfast, we had twenty-three fish, none less than 1¾ lb. For half an hour after breakfast the trout rose greedily, and then, like the beaver in 'The Hunting of the Snark,' 'they became unaccountably shy.' Towards evening a New Jersey party, father and son, came up the river. They had stopped *en route* to British Columbia for two days' fishing, and they wished to send a firkin of salted trout to friends in Montreal. By offering them our evening's catch we were set free to kill all we could with clear consciences. The trout were in very good humour, yet our two rods only took eighteen in two hours. Five of these were under regulation size, and were thrown back. The other thirteen ranged from 2 lb. to 4 lb. Our failure to take more was due to too much luck, and too little. Munn was occupied for thirty-five minutes with a monster, hooked the first cast. We saw this fish wallowing on the surface several times during the long strain of playing him in the great current. At last he was within ten feet of the net, when up went his big square tail and he had broken away; This trout would not have been indecent enough to weigh less than 7 lb. I was myself occupied for a still greater time with a treble catch of 3 lb., 2½ lb., and 1½ lb., all three of which Charley

managed to save by clever work with the net and a small gaff. My companion landed a double of 2 lb. and 2½ lb. The New Jersey men anchored lower down and had fair luck, but I think Charley had secured for us the best water. What with four tents, two camp fires, a swarthy group of guides lit up by flames, a lovely long twilight and 'International Courtesies,' including some admissions as to the merit of Canadian 'skitchawaboo' at the proper temperature, that last evening at Pine Portage was remarkably pleasant. Next morning, bright and early, the New Jersey men were off for Lake Superior, and we, after a few hours' rambling and fishing, turned our bronzed faces towards home.



A VISIT TO THE TRANSVAAL

BY M. BURTON DURHAM.

THREE years ago Dame Fortune willed that I should sojourn for a time in that land of dust, drought, and gold, the Transvaal; and one glorious morning in April 1896, after a very oily and uneventful voyage from Southampton, I stood on the deck of the old 'Garth Castle' (the sister ship to the ill-fated 'Drummond Castle') as she slowly steamed into the bay, gazing upon the beautiful panorama of the white bungalows and buildings of Cape Town nestling at the foot of the towering and mist-veiled Table Mountain.

I made but a very short stay in the beautiful city of Cape Town, and need not at this time of day endeavour to depict the beauties and attractions of the Premier City of South Africa, but will hark forward to the gist of my story.

Having paid my bill at a small but particularly comfortable hotel (the proprietor of which, by-the-bye, is an old Castle Line purser, and knows how to look after his guests) to which I had been recommended by the ship's doctor, I jumped into one of the antiquated white-topped hansom cabs which ply for hire in Cape Town, and drove along the magnificent main thoroughfare known as Adderley Street to the railway terminus, when, after a great deal of trouble and very nearly missing my train, I found my luggage stowed away in a corner of the station near the refreshment bar, where doubtless the trustworthy porter whom I had instructed to take down my worldly goods to the mail train had brought up to refresh himself, and had left my traps to take care of themselves. Needless to say, I had made the fatal error of tipping that porter in advance.

It was dark when the mail train steamed out of Cape Town *en route* to Johannesburg, and I therefore missed seeing the spectacle of really grand mountain and vineyard scenery through

which the railway runs its sinuous way for a few miles outside Cape Town; and, oh! ye gods, what a frightfully monotonous journey the remainder of the thousand and some odd miles was to me, an Englishman fresh from the rural beauties of English scenery! As I gazed from the dusty window of the railway carriage upon the seemingly endless waste of the great Karoo and the brown burned-up veldt, the only objects to break the terrible monotony of the scene were the chains of low and fantastically shaped mountains or rocky kopjees, with here and there a small farmstead dotted on the desert like a tiny island pitched down into a sea of sepia. From the window of my carriage I saw great numbers of ostriches running on the farms, a few spring- and blesbok, some paau (great bustard), and a fair amount of smaller game. In every little pool of water within sight of the railway were numbers of wild fowl of many different species.

At the end of what appeared to have been a month of weary travelling, but which was in reality but two days and three nights, the tall smoke-stacks and headgears of the mines showing against the skyline told me that I was nearing my destination, and at six o'clock on the last morning of the journey I was roughly awakened from my troubled dreams by a huge Dutchman shouting in my ear some guttural language I did not understand. But my fellow-passenger (also a half-bred Boer, who amused himself during the greater part of the journey by playing the most ear-splitting discord on an accordion) said, guns, revolvers, dop (Cape brandy), at the same time pointing to a hand-bag I had stowed on the rack, and I then began to understand that all luggage was to be examined by the Customs officers. Those searchers routed out every little article in my trunks, and when they discovered a re-capping and turnover machine amongst my paraphernalia, I verily believe they imagined I was trying to smuggle through some part of a machine gun. Possibly those wide-awake officials had been hauled over the coals for having allowed certain machine-guns, which were consigned to the Reform Committee of Johannesburg, to pass through their hands, in their ignorance believing them to be (as described by the consignees) new patent gold-mining drills.

However, after a great deal of trouble, I made the interpreter understand the machine was simply used in the manufacture of shot cartridges, and having paid duty on various articles (many of which I afterwards discovered were not dutiable), including gun, saddlery, &c. &c., to the tune of 7*l.* 10*s.*, the Custom House officers very kindly informed me that I might proceed on my

journey; but I have no doubt I was shadowed to my hotel in Johannesburg, for the unfortunate Reform Committee business, which happened only a couple of months before my visit to the Transvaal, had caused the Dutch to suspect every Roinek (redneck) of being a filibuster.

I cannot say that my first impression of Johannesburg was particularly favourable, for a dust storm was raging upon the day of my arrival, and no sooner had I set foot on the miserable platform which did duty as a station (a very fine station has been erected since), than I was surrounded by a dozen hotel touts, who stuck to me like leeches, until, in sheer desperation, I asked a gentleman who was standing near, evidently enjoying the tumult caused by the incoming mail train, whether he could recommend me an hotel, which he kindly did, advising me to put up at the Grand National in Pritchard Street, which proved a most comfortable, though somewhat expensive, residence.

I have no wish to bore my readers with a detailed description of the golden city of Johannesburg; suffice it to say that, considering ten years ago the site upon which the fine town now stands was a tract of bare veldt, with huge herds of antelope running wild thereon, and possibly a few prospectors' tents dotted here and there along the reef, one must feel struck at the enormous strides that have been made on the Rand by European industry and capital during this short lapse of time; and it seems more than hard that the Uitlander, the man who has made Johannesburg, and, indeed, I might say without erring, the Transvaal what it is to-day, should have to knuckle under in every way to the egoism and egregious ignorance of the Boer and his parasitical adviser the Hollander.

Until the Uitlander taught the average Boer the use and value of money, he asked for nothing better than game for his rifle, a few oxen and sheep, and his bit of biltong and tobacco. He certainly was not the man who discovered the main reef from the wealth of which has sprung up the wonderful city of Johannesburg. Neither was it the Boer who found the enormous sums of money that have been expended in erecting the towns and villages, and in sinking the mines, which extend considerably over a hundred miles along the reef; but it is the Boer who would like to skim all the cream from the Uitlanders' milk, and he would then probably grumble at leaving the Uitlanders the poor wash that remained after the skimming.

Johannesburg boasts a really fine racecourse, and very excellent sport is shown both at the big quarterly meetings and

also at the Pony and Galloway meetings, which are held every month ; and I must mention that welshing at a Johannesburg race meeting is (or was) an unknown evil, owing to the fact that none but licensed bookmakers are allowed on the course, each bookmaker being bound by the rules of Tattersall's of South Africa to deposit a certain sum of money with the secretary of that institution, and the bookmaker may not make a 'book' for a greater sum than the amount he has deposited.

The Rand Polo Club have a very fair ground about two miles outside the town: their crack team would, I believe, give a good account of themselves at Hurlingham and Ranelagh, and some rattling good ponies may be seen on a match day of the Rand Polo Club.

A certain genial and good sportsman, well known in South Africa as an owner of racehorses, some three years ago imported from England to the Rand a small pack of foxhounds, which, if I mistake not, were draughted from the kennels of the Quorn, Pytchley, and North Warwickshire Hunts, and the same gentleman engaged Tom Parker, formerly first whip to the North Warwick, to hunt the little pack.

The hounds were very comfortably kennelled in a picturesque spot lying about six miles from the town, and Tom Parker and his honorary whipper-in, Mr. P. Burton Durham, were mounted on small but very fast and clever Basuto ponies. I will give, as well as my memory serves me, a short account of one of the many runs I enjoyed with the pack of the Johannesburg Hunt Club.

In the first place, I must mention the South African veldt practically holds no scent after the hot morning sun has dissipated the heavy dews of the night, although in the summer, during the rainy season, generally speaking both scent and going are good. But the run I am about to record took place in mid-winter and the sun-scorched veldt was hard as macadam.

The meet was fixed for five A.M., some fifteen miles out of Johannesburg, and we—viz. the M.F.H., Tom Parker and his lieutenant, two Irish ladies (at one time well known with the Galway Blazers), and perhaps a dozen men, including the present writer—turned up within a few minutes of the appointed hour.

After greeting the M.F.H. and staff, the pack were taken off to draw a big bit of rough grass which lay about half a mile across the veldt from the hotel we had put up at the preceding night. Scarcely had hounds entered the patch of grass (which grew well above one's boots, and so full of dew was it that my breeches were in a few moments wringing wet), when, with a burst of

music, the dappled beauties proclaim that something is afoot, and a few minutes later a long foxy-looking animal (the best description of a jackal I can give) breaks at the far end of the covert and heads for a small eucalyptus (blue gum) plantation lying about one and a half mile to the westward as hounds are running.

The pack stream are close to his brush, and the master, huntsman and whip are well up with the hounds; the ladies are holding their own with the best of us.

To those of my readers who are fortunate enough to be able to hunt in the 'shires,' doubtless a run with the little Johannesburg pack would have proved very tame sport; for, beyond a few spruits or nullahs, no 'lepping' is to be obtained, and the going is usually terribly hard, rendered dangerous also by the innumerable meerkat and antbear holes which are in many cases hidden from human sight by the tall grass. But it is wonderful the way in which the native-bred horses dodge these horse traps by jumping over or swerving to the side of the holes, and I do not remember 'Bushman' (a very clever and clean-bred Basuto pony) having put me down once even in the hardest gallop across the treacherous veldt during the whole of the two years I owned him. But let us 'for'ard on' or we shall be left behind, for the hounds mean having Jack's blood before he gains the friendly blue-gum covert, and that wide sluit will take a bit of charging to get over. 'Hold up, horse!' is the cry, as Bushman flies the sluit and lands up to his hocks in a bog on the other side.

After a deal of splashing and slithering in the spongy quagmire, pony and man scramble out on to firmer ground, and turning in my saddle I see the two Irish ladies charge the brook together and land safely on firm ground; but not so their cavalier, an Afrikander, and not used to this game. His big Free State grey goes at the water in good style; but not so his rider, who pulls at his mount just as he is taking off, and consequently both man and horse are precipitated into the muddy depths of the stream; but both are soon on terra firma again, and beyond putting on an extra coat of mud, neither man nor beast is much the worse for the purler.

However, the hounds have come to an abrupt stop; for Master Jack has gone to earth in an antbear hole, and we set to work to smoke him out, as there is neither terrier nor spade at hand. But Jack refuses to be stunk out of his haven of refuge, so he is left to run another day, and hounds are taken off to draw the blue-gum covert, in which they have not been many minutes when a whimper from Amazon, followed by the full

chorus of the pack, tells us that game is afoot, and a few minutes later a ringing 'View hallo' from the honorary whip at the far end of the plantation proclaims that the quarry has gone away. A moment after Tom Parker caps his hounds on the line of a fine blesbok, which is heading for the kopjees, lying about three miles away.

Helter skelter we go in the wake of the little darlings as they race across the hard veldt with a breast-high scent, and as the iron-shod hoofs of my pony ring out as they strike the ground, the old saying, 'It's the 'ammer 'ammer,' &c. &c., comes vividly to my mind.

A big man on a bay stallion comes a horrible purler, as his horse puts his foot into a hole, turns a complete somersault, and finally rolls on his rider's leg, which is badly fractured, and almost simultaneously the whip's mount follows suit; but Mr. Burton Durham, a light weight, is soon in the saddle again, and sailing away in the wake of his hounds.

We have been galloping hard for twenty-five minutes, but the blesbok proves one too many for the little pack, who are stopped, as the buck has run over the boulder-bestrewn kopjee, where it is impossible for a horse to follow; and the sun being now well up in the heavens and scent failing, we return to breakfast at the little hotel, which meal being finished, we canter across the veldt to our several offices in town, having enjoyed a capital gallop before the ordinary run of Johannesburgers had left their beds.

I am sorry to say the life of the Johannesburg Hunt Club was short. First, because of bad times, and secondly, owing to the fact that the climate proved fatal to many of the hounds, pneumonia being the disease they chiefly suffered from. Parker was never able to rear a litter of puppies, although several litters were whelped. The puppies would apparently thrive for a time until they contracted distemper, and a few days of that disease was sufficient to wipe them out. Eventually, the hounds were handed over to the Cape Town Hunt Club, where I must leave them.

As probably my readers are aware, South Africa is a perfect paradise for feathered game, and I will now tell of a couple of days' small game and wildfowl shooting which my friends Birch, Erskine, and myself enjoyed within twenty miles of the Golden City.

One glorious morning in April, Erskine and myself (Birch had left for our hunting ground the previous afternoon in charge

of our paraphernalia, which was loaded up on a small shooting waggon drawn by eight mules), having finished a substantial breakfast and got our pipes under weigh, mounted our ponies and made a bee-line across the veldt for the place where we had arranged that Birch should outspan.

Nothing of a very interesting nature occurred during the ride to camp, beyond our seeing a fine piece of natural hawking between a very large, slaty, grey hawk (the name of which unfortunately I am ignorant of) and a red-winged partridge, when after a long flight the falcon succeeded in striking his quarry.

After about a three hours' ride we arrived at camp, and found Birch outspanned within a short distance of a vlei or lake, of about three hundred and fifty acres, the sides of which were fringed by very tall reeds, and the greater part of the lake covered with a network of aquatic plants; and in the many little channels running through the weeds, or dodging in and out amongst the reeds, were to be seen great numbers of many different kinds of wildfowl, from the great bronze and white spur-winged goose to a tiny little grebe, which I take to be the same bird as that frequenter of our English rivers and ponds, the dabchick.

Along the shores and on the shallows of the vlei were many flocks of different sorts of waders, and on a patch of clayey mud which had been left in a shallow part of the vlei by the drought of the preceding dry season were assembled about fifty sacred Ibises (*Ibis religiosa*) boring into the ooze with their long curlew-like bills in search of the succulent worms which harboured therein.

Swimming about in a big open space in the weeds near the centre of the vlei were a company of some hundreds of coots either feeding or preening their feathers, whilst fishing along the shores of the vlei were numbers of the common heron, a few of those beautiful members of the Herodiones family, the white African heron, and perhaps a dozen Kaffir or crowned cranes might be seen strutting along in search of the frogs and lizards which abounded in the lake.

Many different species of the two great families of the Anseres and Grallæ were there, but unfortunately I am not particularly well versed in the fauna of South Africa, and I am therefore unable to class nearly all the birds I saw; but amongst the many different kinds of waders paddling on the shallows I noticed that nimble little frequenter of our British coasts, the dunlin, green-shank, avocet, thickknee or stone-curlew, and a beautiful black

and white plover; and whilst walking round the vlei in search of a fountain or spring from which to obtain water for our pots and kettles, I sprang several wisps of common snipe, and from the spongy sides of the little trickling spring from which I filled my water cask, a couple of those beautifully pencilled birds known as the painted snipe rose almost at my feet, dropping again about one hundred yards further along the vlei.

In the soft clayey soil which surrounded the spring I also observed the fresh spoor of a blesbok, which had evidently been drinking at the fountain in the early morning.

When we had finished our afternoon meal, which consisted of pea soup made from a tin of 'bully beef' (corned beef), pea flour and preserved vegetables, followed by a brace of korhaan (lesser bustard) which Birch had shot as he was trekking from Johannesburg, Erskine and myself, accompanied by a couple of Kaffirs to act the part of retrievers, took our guns and wended our way to the vlei. Birch, taking a brace of well-broken liver-and-white pointers, started off to work a piece of rough veldt on the chance of finding korhaan or partridge during the couple of hours of daylight that remained to us.

We did not wish to disturb the fowl on the vlei unnecessarily until the following morning, when our big shoot was to take place, and therefore Erskine and I simply walked along the shores, beating the clumps of reeds as we went, picking up a couple of grey duck, three red-billed teal, a couple of snipe, and Erskine was fortunate enough to shoot one of what were evidently the couple of painted snipe I had sprung upon the fountain already mentioned.

We ought to have bagged at least three couples more snipe, but somehow our powder wasn't as straight as it might have been (Erskine said it was the abominable Transvaal powder, although I noticed his cartridges were charged with a well-known English nitro). We then sent the boys up to the waggon with the slain, and walked about half a mile across the veldt to some big outcrops (boulders), for the sun sinking behind the line of low rocky kopjees that lay to the westward told us that ere long the flight of the fowl as they winged their way to their nightly feeding grounds would begin.

Taking up our stations at about one hundred yards distant from each other, we had not long to wait before that whistling noise so dear to the wildfowler, which heralds the coming of fowl, sounded in our ears, and a moment later a big bunch of teal passed between my companion and myself, too far for Erskine,

but nicely for me, and I was fortunate in bringing down three of their number with my two barrels. Following close came duck and teal innumerable, and we ought to have made a good bag; but neither my friend nor myself is a 'dab' at flight shooting, and as the light faded and the outlines of the passing fowl grew less and less defined, I fear the number of empty cartridge cases which lay at our feet after the fusillade greatly exceeded the number of slain; for our total score only amounted to five teal and seven grey duck, and a very beautiful night heron, which stands at my right hand in the form of a handscreen as I sit writing this yarn. When it grew too dark to shoot, we hied back to camp, guided thither by the light of the cowdung fire which gleamed cheerfully through the darkness.

Birch arrived soon after us, bringing in a magnificent pauw (great bustard), a leash of korhaan, and a red-winged partridge.

He told us he had no difficulty in approaching the pauw, which is usually a most difficult creature to stalk, but doubtless the bird in question had been wounded before he shot it.

We turned in at an early hour, Birch and myself in the waggon, whilst Erskine preferred sleeping on the stretcher which was slung under the buck of the waggon between the axle-trees, and were soon lulled to sleep by the sweet music of the wild-fowl on the vlei.

I was awakened the next morning, just as the first grey streaks of the breaking day crept through the baize flys of our waggon, by Jacob, a huge Zulu, who acted the part of cook, &c., poking his woolly head through the aperture and calling, 'Coffee, Baas,' in his musical drawl. We gulp down the steaming beverage out of our enamelled tin cups, slip into our clothes, and go out into the cold morning air to inspect the dozen or so Kaffirs which one of our boys had brought in to beat the vlei for us.

We found the Kaffirs (chiefly Zulus and Basutos), wrapped in their blankets, sitting in a circle round a huge three-legged pot of mealy meal (a porridge made from Indian corn meal) which formed their breakfast, and after a great deal of difficulty, Erskine, who speaks Zulu fluently, managed to drum into the thick woolly pate of the head boy instructions regarding the manner in which the fowl were to be driven over the guns. Then we sent the gang of beaters by a long détour to the far end of the lake, whilst my companions and myself, laden with a goodly supply of cartridges, walked to the other end of the vlei and took up our stations (Birch the centre, Erskine the right hand, and myself the left hand stand) in the clumps of reeds which rose well above our

heads, but which were not sufficiently dense to shut out from our sight the movements of the beaters.

I must mention that the vlei was long but comparatively narrow, and therefore, placed as we were in the reeds with about one hundred yards intervening between each gun, any birds passing between us would be within fair shooting distance.

We had not been settled long in our respective shelters when the outside beaters, who carried white flags, moved forward, the main body following in line about two hundred yards in the rear; and how those Kaffirs did yell as they blundered and splashed through the waist-deep mud and water of the vlei, although Erskine has threatened the first man that opened his blubber lips a good jaamboking!

But here comes the first little bunch of teal heading straight for me, and surely enough they pass clean over my head, packed as closely as sardines in a box; and to this day I never could understand why I only managed to bring down three of the company with my two barrels, for I am bound to confess I 'browned' them.

The teal then turned right handed and ran the gauntlet of the other guns, and I can hear my brother gunners pump out a couple of shots each; but I am not able to watch how they score, for I have scarcely time to ram home a couple of cartridges when about thirty big grey duck pass me like a flash of lightning, and although I make a shocking miss with my right barrel, I double up a bird flying a little outside the rest of the company.

The air is now alive with fowl, but they do not fly my way, although Birch and Erskine are shooting as fast as they can load and fire. But for once the old axiom—viz. 'all good things come to him who waits'—proves true; for as the beaters near the last big clump of reeds, nine huge spur-winged geese rise from the covert and leisurely flap their way between Birch and myself, and although I again muff with my first barrel, I cut down the tail bird with my second, and Birch also scores with a very long shot.

These were the only geese we saw during the drive, and this was disappointing, as I had noticed several paddlings of spur-winged geese with the aid of my field glasses the evening before. I obtain a good many more shots at duck and teal, but I am not in good form to-day, and must confess that I allow many easy shots to pass me, although I notice my companions drop bird after bird.

The beaters now approach so near that I can hear the splashing noise they make as they wade through the muddy lake,

and one by one those most wary of wary wildfowl, the coots, are sneaking out of the last little growth of reeds. We shoot several couples, but the majority break back over the heads of the beaters.

Now the 'boys' come up to us, and we set them to work to gather the slain and cripples, for it is useless to try the vlei again to-day, as all the fowl have flown to happier and quieter quarters.

When the boys have gathered all the birds they can find, they (the fowl) are laid out upon the shore of the lake, and a fine show they make.

The shoot probably lasted less than an hour, although neither of us timed it, but I find on referring to my diary that the aggregate bag was as follows:—Two spur-winged geese, eleven grey duck, nineteen teal, and thirteen coot, making a total of forty-five head.

When we had sent the Kaffirs back to camp with the fowl, Erskine, Birch, and myself separated and walked round the vlei, and although I myself shot nothing but an avocet that got up from a rill, Birch bagged a couple and a half of snipe and a thick-knee, and Erskine three couple of snipe and a hammer-kop (a small species of crane).

Thus ended a very enjoyable early morning's sport, and after a big breakfast of game stew made from korhaan, partridge, snipe, courser, &c., we inspanned the mules and trekked back to the Golden City of South Africa, which we reached in time to attend the afternoon share market.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.

BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

No. VI.—PHILIPPA'S FOX-HUNT

No one can accuse Philippa and me of having married in haste. As a matter of fact, it was but little under five years from that autumn evening on the river when I had said what is called in Ireland 'the hard word,' to the day in August when I was led to the altar by my best man, and was subsequently led away from it by Mrs. Sinclair Yeates. About two years out of the five had been spent by me at Shreelane in ceaseless warfare with drains, eaveshoots, chimneys, pumps; all those fundamentals, in short, that the ingenuous and improving tenant expects to find established as a basis from which to rise to higher things. As far as rising to higher things went, frequent ascents to the roof to search for leaks summed up my achievements; in fact, I suffered so general a shrinkage of my ideals that the triumph of making the hall-door bell ring blinded me to the fact that the rat-holes in the hall floor were nailed up with pieces of tin biscuit boxes and that the casual visitor could, instead of leaving a card, have easily written his name in the damp on the walls.

Philippa, however, proved adorably callous to these and similar shortcomings. She regarded Shreelane and its floundering,

foundering ménage of incapables in the light of a gigantic picnic in a foreign land; she held long conversations daily with Mrs. Cadogan, in order, as she informed me, to acquire the language; without any ulterior domestic intention she engaged kitchen-maids because of the beauty of their eyes, and housemaids because they had such delightfully picturesque old mothers, and she declined to correct the phraseology of the parlour-maid, whose painful habit it was to whisper 'Do ye choose cherry or clarry?' when proffering the wine. Fast-days, perhaps, afforded my wife her first insight into the sterner realities of Irish housekeeping. Philippa had what are known as High Church proclivities, and took the matter seriously.

'I don't know how we are to manage for the servants' dinner to-morrow, Sinclair,' she said, coming in to my office one Thursday morning; 'Julia says she "promised God this long time that she wouldn't eat an egg on a fast-day," and the kitchen-maid says she won't eat herrings "without they're fried with onions," and Mrs. Cadogan says she will "not go to them extremes for servants."'

'I should let Mrs. Cadogan settle the menu herself,' I suggested.

'I asked her to do that,' replied Philippa, 'and she only said she "thanked God *she* had no appetite!"'

The lady of the house here fell away into unseasonable laughter.

I made the demoralising suggestion that, as we were going away for a couple of nights, we might safely leave them to fight it out, and the problem was abandoned.

Philippa had been much called on by the neighbourhood in all its shades and grades, and daily she and her trousseau frocks presented themselves at hall-doors of varying dimensions in due acknowledgment of civilities. In Ireland, it may be noted, the process known in England as 'summering and wintering' a newcomer does not obtain; sociability and curiosity alike forbid delay. The visit to which we owed our escape from the intricacies of the fast-day was to the Knoxes of Castle Knox, relations in some remote and tribal way of my landlord, Mr. Flurry of that ilk. It involved a short journey by train, and my wife's longest basket-trunk; it also, which was more serious, involved my being lent a horse to go out cubbing the following morning.

At Castle Knox we sank into an almost forgotten environment of draught-proof windows and doors, of deep carpets, of silent servants instead of clattering belligerents. Philippa told me

afterwards that it had only been by an effort that she had restrained herself from snatching up the train of her wedding gown as she paced across the wide hall on little Sir Valentine's arm. After three weeks at Shreelane she found it difficult to remember that the floor was neither damp nor dusty.

I had the good fortune to be of the limited number of those who got on with Lady Knox, chiefly, I imagine, because I was as a worm before her, and thankfully permitted her to do all the talking.

'Your wife is extremely pretty,' she pronounced autocratically, surveying Philippa between the candle-shades; 'does she ride?'

Lady Knox was a short square lady, with a weather-beaten face, and an eye decisive from long habit of taking her own line across country and elsewhere. She would have made a very imposing little coachman, and would have caused her underlings to rue the day they had the presumption to be born; it struck me that Sir Valentine sometimes did so.

'I'm glad you like her looks,' I replied, 'as I fear you will find her thoroughly despicable otherwise; for one thing, she not only can't ride, but she believes that I can!'

'Oh come, you're not as bad as all that!' my hostess was good enough to say; 'I'm going to put you up on Sorcerer to-morrow, and we'll see you at the top of the hunt—if there is one. That young Knox hasn't a notion how to draw these woods.'

'Well, the best run we had last year out of this place was with Flurry's hounds,' struck in Miss Sally, sole daughter of Sir Valentine's house and home, from her place halfway down the table. It was not difficult to see that she and her mother held different views on the subject of Mr. Flurry Knox.

'I call it a criminal thing in anyone's great-great-grandfather to rear up a preposterous troop of sons and plant them all out in his own country,' Lady Knox said to me with apparent irrelevance. 'I detest collaterals. Blood may be thicker than water, but it is also a great deal nastier. In this country I find that fifteenth cousins consider themselves near relations if they live within twenty miles of one!'

Having before now taken in the position with regard to Flurry Knox, I took care to accept these remarks as generalities, and turned the conversation to other themes.

'I see Mrs. Yeates is doing wonders with Mr. Hamilton,' said Lady Knox presently, following the direction of my eyes, which had strayed away to where Philippa was beaming upon her left-hand neighbour, a mildewed-looking old clergyman, who was

delivering a long dissertation, the purport of which we were happily unable to catch.

'She has always had a gift for the Church,' I said.

'Not curates?' said Lady Knox, in her deep voice.

I made haste to reply that it was the elders of the Church who were venerated by my wife.

'Well, she has her fancy in old Eustace Hamilton; he's elderly enough!' said Lady Knox. 'I wonder if she'd venerate him as much if she knew that he had fought with his sister-in-law, and they haven't spoken for thirty years! though for the matter of that,' she added, 'I think it shows his good sense!'

LADY KNOX

'Mrs. Knox is rather a friend of mine,' I ventured.

'Is she? H'm! Well, she's not one of mine!' replied my hostess, with her usual definiteness. 'I'll say one thing for her, I believe she's always been a sportswoman. She's very rich, you know, and they say she only married old Badger Knox to save his hounds from being sold to pay his debts, and then she took the horn from him and hunted them herself. Has she been rude to your wife yet? No? Oh, well, she will. It's a mere question of time. She hates all English people. You know the story they tell of her? She was coming home from London, and when she was getting her ticket the man asked if she had said a ticket for York. "No, thank God, Cork!" says Mrs. Knox.'

'Well, I rather agree with her!' said I; 'but why did she fight with Mr. Hamilton?'

'Oh, nobody knows. I don't believe they know themselves! Whatever it was, the old lady drives five miles to Fortwilliam every Sunday, rather than go to his church, just outside her own back gates,' Lady Knox said with a laugh like a terrier's bark. 'I wish I'd fought with him myself,' she said; 'he gives us forty minutes every Sunday.'

As I struggled into my boots the following morning, I felt that Sir Valentine's acid confidences on cub-hunting, bestowed on me at midnight, did credit to his judgment. 'A very moderate amusement, my dear Major,' he had said, in his dry little voice; 'you should stick to shooting. No one expects you to shoot before daybreak.'

It was six o'clock as I crept downstairs, and found Lady Knox and Miss Sally at breakfast, with two lamps on the table and a foggy daylight oozing in from under the half-raised blinds. Philippa was already in the hall, pumping up her bicycle, in a state of excitement at the prospect of her first experience of hunting that would have been more comprehensible to me had she been going to ride a strange horse, as I was. As I bolted my food I saw the horses being led past the windows, and a faint twang of a horn told that Flurry Knox and his hounds were not far off.

Miss Sally jumped up.

'If I'm not on the Cockatoo before the hounds come up, I shall never get there!' she said, hobbling out of the room in the toils of her safety habit. Her small, alert face looked very childish under her riding hat; the lamp-light struck sparks out of her thick coil of golden-red hair; I wondered how I had ever thought her like her prim little father.

She was already on her white cob when I got to the hall-door, and Flurry Knox was riding over the glistening wet grass with his hounds, while his whip, Dr. Jerome Hickey, was having a stirring time with some of the young entry and the rabbit-holes. They moved on without stopping, up a back avenue, under tall and dripping trees, to a thick laurel covert, at some little distance from the house. Into this the hounds were thrown, and the usual period of fidgety inaction set in for the riders, of whom, all told, there were about half a dozen. Lady Knox, square and solid, on her big, confidential iron grey, was near me, and her eyes were on me and my mount; with her rubicund face and white collar she was more than ever like a coachman.

'Sorcerer looks as if he suited you well,' she said, after a few minutes of silence, during which the hounds rustled and crackled steadily through the laurels; 'he's a little high on the leg, and so are you, you know, so you show each other off.'

Sorcerer was standing like a rock, with his good-looking head in the air and his eyes fastened on the covert. His manners, so far, had been those of a perfect gentleman, and were in marked contrast to those of Miss Sally's cob, who was sidling, hopping,

and snatching unappeasably at his bit. Philippa had disappeared from view down the avenue ahead. The fog was melting, and the sun threw long blades of light through the trees; everything was quiet, and in the distance the curtained windows of the house marked the warm repose of Sir Valentine, and those of the party who shared his opinion of cubbing.

'Hark! hark to cry there!'

MISS SALLY AND THE COCKATOO MOVED AWAY

It was Flurry's voice, away at the other side of the covert. The rustling and brushing through the laurels became more vehement, then passed out of hearing.

'He never will leave his hounds alone,' said Lady Knox disapprovingly.

Miss Sally and the Cockatoo moved away in a series of heraldic capers towards the end of the laurel plantation, and at the same moment I saw Philippa on her bicycle shoot into view on the drive ahead of us.

'I've seen a fox!' she screamed, white with what I believe to

have been personal terror, though she says it was excitement; 'it passed quite close to me!'

'What way did he go?' bellowed a voice which I recognised as Dr. Hickey's, somewhere in the deep of the laurels.

'Down the drive!' returned Philippa, with a pea-hen quality in her tones with which I was quite unacquainted.

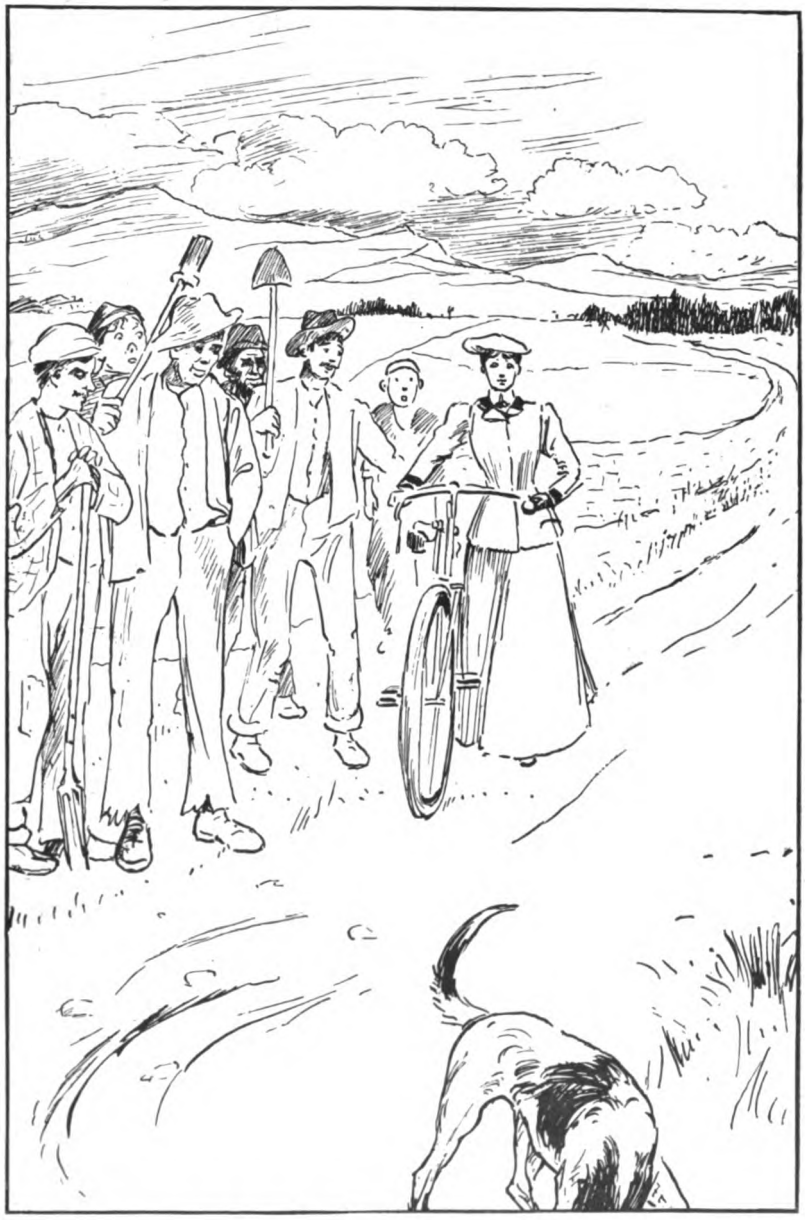
An electrifying screech of 'gone away!' was projected from the laurels by Dr. Hickey.

'Gone away!' chanted Flurry's horn at the top of the covert.

'This is what he calls cubbing!' said Lady Knox, 'a mere farce!' but none the less she loosed her sedate monster into a canter.

Sorcerer got his hind legs under him, and hardened his crest against the bit, as we all hustled along the drive after the flying figure of my wife. I knew very little about horses, but I realised that even with the hounds tumbling hysterically out of the covert, and the Cockatoo kicking the gravel into his face, Sorcerer comported himself with the manners of the best society. Up a side road I saw Flurry Knox opening half of a gate and cramming through it; in a moment we also had crammed through, and the turf of a pasture field was under our feet. Dr. Hickey leaned forward and took hold of his horse; I did likewise, with the trifling difference that my horse took hold of me, and I steered for Flurry Knox with single-hearted purpose, the hounds, already a field ahead, being merely an exciting and noisy accompaniment of this endeavour. A heavy stone wall was the first occurrence of note. Flurry chose a place where the top was loose, and his clumsy looking brown mare changed feet on the rattling stones like a fairy. Sorcerer came at it, tense and collected as a bow at full stretch, and sailed steeply into the air; I saw the wall far beneath me, with an unsuspected ditch on the far side, and I felt my hat following me at the full stretch of its guard as we swept over it, then, with a long slant, we descended to earth some sixteen feet from where we had left it, and I was possessor of the gratifying fact that I had achieved a good-sized 'fly,' and had not perceptibly moved in my saddle. Subsequent disillusioning experience has taught me that but few horses jump like Sorcerer, so gallantly, so sympathetically, and with such supreme mastery of the subject; but none the less the enthusiasm that he imparted to me has never been extinguished, and that October morning ride revealed to me the unsuspected intoxication of fox-hunting.

Behind me I heard the scrabbling of the Cockatoo's little



PHILIPPA'S CORTÈGE

hoofs among the loose stones, and Lady Knox, galloping on my left, jerked a maternal chin over her shoulder to mark her daughter's progress. For my part, had there been an entire circus behind me, I was far too much occupied with ramming on my hat and trying to hold Sorcerer, to have looked round, and all my spare faculties were devoted to steering for Flurry, who had taken a right-handed turn, and was at that moment surmounting a bank of uncertain and briary aspect. I surmounted it also, with the swiftness and simplicity for which the Quaker's methods of bank jumping had not prepared me, and two or three fields, traversed at the same steeplechase pace, brought us to a road and to an abrupt check. There, suddenly, were the hounds, scrambling in baffled silence down into the road from the opposite bank, to look for the line they had overrun, and there, amazingly, was Philippa, engaged in excited converse with several men with spades over their shoulders.

'Did ye see the fox, boys?' shouted Flurry, addressing the group.

'We did! we did!' cried my wife and her friends in chorus; 'he ran up the road!'

'We'd be badly off without Mrs. Yeates!' said Flurry, as he whirled his mare round and clattered up the road with a hustle of hounds after him.

It occurred to me as forcibly as any mere earthly thing can occur to those who are wrapped in the sublimities of a run, that, for a young woman who had never before seen a fox out of a cage at the Zoo, Philippa was taking to hunting very kindly. Her cheeks were a most brilliant pink, her blue eyes shone.

'Oh, Sinclair!' she exclaimed, 'they say he's going for Aussolas, and there's a road I can ride all the way!'

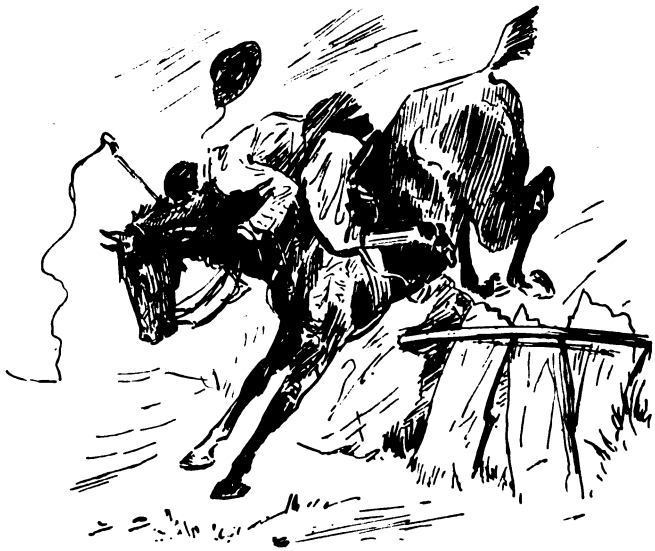
'Ye can, Miss! Sure we'll show you!' chorussed her *cortège.*

Her foot was on the pedal ready to mount. Decidedly my wife was in no need of assistance from me.

Up the road a hound gave a yelp of discovery, and flung himself over a stile into the fields; the rest of the pack went squealing and jostling after him, and I followed Flurry over one of those infinitely varied erections, pleasantly termed 'gaps' in Ireland. On this occasion the gap was made of three razor-edged slabs of slate leaning against an iron bar, and Sorcerer conveyed to me his thorough knowledge of the matter by a lift of his hind-quarters that made me feel as if I were being skilfully kicked downstairs. To what extent I looked it I cannot say, nor providentially can Philippa, as she had already started. I only

know that undeserved good luck restored to me my stirrup before Sorcerer got away with me in the next field.

What followed was, I am told, a very fast fifteen minutes; for me time was not; the empty fields rushed past uncounted, fences came and went in a flash, while the wind sang in my ears, and the dazzle of the early sun was in my eyes. I saw the hounds occasionally, sometimes pouring over a green bank, as the charging breaker lifts and flings itself, sometimes driving across a field, as the white tongues of foam slide racing over the sand; and always ahead of me was Flurry Knox, going as a man goes who



I FELT AS IF I WERE BEING SKILFULLY KICKED DOWNSTAIRS

knows his country, who knows his horse, and whose heart is wholly and absolutely in the right place.

Do what I would, Sorcerer's implacable stride carried me closer and closer to the brown mare, till, as I thundered down the slope of a long field, I was not twenty yards behind Flurry. Sorcerer had stiffened his neck to iron, and to slow him down was beyond me; but I fought his head away to the right, and found myself coming hard and steady at a stone-faced bank with broken ground in front of it. Flurry bore away to the left, shouting something that I did not understand. That Sorcerer shortened his stride at the right moment was entirely due to his own judgment; standing well away from the jump, he rose like a stag out of the tussocky ground, and as he swung my twelve stone six into the

air the obstacle revealed itself to him and me as consisting not of one bank but of two, and between the two lay a deep grassy lane, half choked with furze. I have often been asked to state the width of the bohereen, and can only reply that in my opinion it was at least eighteen feet; Flurry Knox and Dr. Hickey, who did not jump it, say that it is not more than five. What Sorcerer did with it I cannot say; the sensation was of a towering flight with a kick back in it, a biggish drop, and a landing on cee-springs, still on the downhill grade. That was how one of the best horses in Ireland took one of Ireland's most ignorant riders over a very nasty place.

A sombre line of fir-wood lay ahead, rimmed with a grey wall, and in another couple of minutes we had pulled up on the Aussolas road, and were watching the hounds struggling over the wall into Aussolas demesne.

'No hurry now,' said Flurry, turning in his saddle to watch the Cockatoo jump into the road, 'he's to ground in the big earth inside. Well, Major, it's well for you that's a big-jumped horse. I thought you were a dead man awhile ago when you faced him at the bohereen!'

I was disclaiming intention in the matter when Lady Knox and the others joined us.

'I thought you told me your wife was no sportswoman,' she said to me, critically scanning Sorcerer's legs for cuts the while, 'but when I saw her a minute ago she had abandoned her bicycle and was running across country like——'

'Look at her now!' interrupted Miss Sally. 'Oh!—oh!' In the interval between these exclamations my incredulous eyes beheld my wife in mid-air, hand in hand with a couple of stalwart country boys, with whom she was leaping in unison from the top of a bank on to the road.

Everyone, even the saturnine Dr. Hickey, began to laugh; I rode back to Philippa, who was exchanging compliments and congratulations with her escort.

'Oh, Sinclair!' she cried, 'wasn't it splendid? I saw you jumping, and everything! Where are they going now?'

'My dear girl,' I said, with marital disapproval, 'you're killing yourself. Where's your bicycle?'

'Oh, it's punctured in a sort of lane, back there. It's all right; and then they'—she breathlessly waved her hand at her attendants—'they showed me the way.'

'Begor! you proved very good, Miss!' said a grinning cavalier.

'Faith she did!' said another, polishing his shining brow with his white flannel coat-sleeve, 'she lepped like a haarse!'

'And may I ask how you propose to go home?' said I.

'I don't know and I don't care! I'm not going home!' She cast an entirely disobedient eye at me. 'And your eyeglass is hanging down your back and your tie is bulging out over your waistcoat!'

The little group of riders had begun to move away.

'We're going on into Aussolas,' called out Flurry; 'come on, and make my grandmother give you some breakfast, Mrs. Yeates; she always has it at eight o'clock.'

The front gates were close at hand, and we turned in under the tall beech trees, with the unswept leaves rustling round the horses' feet, and the lovely blue of the October morning sky filling the spaces between the smooth grey branches and the golden leaves. The woods rang with the voices of the hounds, enjoying an untrammelled rabbit hunt, while the Master and the Whip, both on foot, strolled along unconcernedly with their bridles over their arms, making themselves agreeable to my wife, an occasional touch of Flurry's horn, or a crack of Dr. Hickey's whip, just indicating to the pack that the authorities still took a friendly interest in their doings.

Down a grassy glade in the wood a party of old Mrs. Knox's young horses suddenly swept into view, headed by an old mare, who, with her tail over her back, stampeded ponderously past our cavalcade, shaking and swinging her handsome old head, while her youthful friends bucked and kicked and snapped at each other round her with the ferocious humour of their kind.

'Here, Jerome, take the horn,' said Flurry to Dr. Hickey; 'I'm going to see Mrs. Yeates up to the house, the way these tomfools won't gallop on top of her.'

From this point it seems to me that Philippa's adventures are more worthy of record than mine, and as she has favoured me with a full account of them, I venture to think my version may be relied on.

Mrs. Knox was already at breakfast when Philippa was led, quaking, into her formidable presence. My wife's acquaintance with Mrs. Knox was, so far, limited to a state visit on either side, and she found but little comfort in Flurry's assurances that his grandmother wouldn't mind if he brought all the hounds in to breakfast, coupled with the statement that she would put her eyes on sticks for the Major.

Whatever the truth of this may have been, Mrs. Knox

received her guest with an equanimity quite unshaken by the fact that her boots were in the fender instead of on her feet, and that a couple of shawls of varying dimensions and degrees of age did not conceal the inner presence of a magenta flannel dressing jacket. She installed Philippa at the table and plied her with food, oblivious as to whether the needful implements with which to eat it were forthcoming or no. She told Flurry where a vixen had reared her family, and she watched him ride away, with some biting comments on his mare's hocks, screamed after him the window.

The dining-room at Aussolas Castle is one of the many rooms in Ireland in which Cromwell is said to have stabled his horse; (and probably no one would have objected less than Mrs. Knox, had she been consulted in the matter). Philippa questions if the room had ever been tidied up since, and she endorses Flurry's observation that 'there wasn't a day in the year you wouldn't get feeding for a hen and chickens on the floor.' Opposite to Philippa, on a Louis Quinze chair, sat Mrs. Knox's woolly dog, its suspicious little eyes peering at her out of their setting of pink lids and dirty white wool. A couple of young horses outside the windows tore at the matted creepers on the walls, or thrust faces that were half-shy, half-impudent, into the room. Portly pigeons waddled to and fro on the broad window-sill, sometimes flying in to perch on the picture-frames, while they kept up incessantly a hoarse and pompous cooing.

Animals and children are, as a rule, alike destructive to conversation; but Mrs. Knox, when she chose, *bien entendu*, could have made herself agreeable in a Noah's ark, and Philippa has a gift of sympathetic attention that personal experience has taught me to regard with distrust as well as respect, while it has often made me realise the worldly wisdom of Kingsley's injunction:

'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.'

Family prayers, declaimed by Mrs. Knox with alarming austerity, followed close on breakfast, Philippa and a vinegar-faced henchwoman forming the family. The prayers were long, and through the open window as they progressed came distantly a whoop or two; the declamatory tones staggered a little, and then continued at a distinctly higher rate of speed.

'Ma'am! Ma'am!' whispered a small voice at the window.

Mrs. Knox made a repressive gesture and held on her way. A sudden outcry of hounds followed, and the owner of the whisper, a small boy with a face freckled like a turkey's egg, darted from

the window and dragged a donkey and bath-chair into view. Philippa admits to having lost the thread of the discourse, but she thinks that the 'Amen' that immediately ensued can hardly have come in its usual place. Mrs. Knox shut the book abruptly, scrambled up from her knees, and said, 'They've found!'

In a surprisingly short space of time she had added to her attire her boots, a fur cape, and a garden hat, and was in the bath-chair, the small boy stimulating the donkey with the success peculiar to his class, while Philippa hung on behind.

The woods of Aussolas are hilly and extensive, and on that particular morning it seemed that they held as many foxes as hound. In vain was the horn blown and the whips cracked, small rejoicing parties of hounds, each with a fox of its own, scoured to and fro; every labourer in the vicinity had left his work, and was sedulously heading every fox with yells that would have befitted a tiger hunt, and sticks and stones when occasion served.

'Will I pull out as far as the big rosydandhrum, Ma'am?' inquired the small boy; 'I seen three of the dogs go in it, and they yowling.'

'You will,' said Mrs. Knox, thumping the donkey on the back with her umbrella; 'here! Jeremiah Regan! Come down out of that with that pitchfork! Do you want to kill the fox, you fool?'

'I do not, your honour, Ma'am,' responded Jeremiah Regan, a tall young countryman, emerging from a bramble brake.

'Did you see him?' said Mrs. Knox eagerly.

'I seen himself and his ten pups drinking below at the lake ere yestherday, your honour, Ma'am, and he as big as a chestnut horse!' said Jeremiah.

'Faugh! Yesterday!' snorted Mrs. Knox; 'go on to the rhododendrons, Johnny!'

The party, reinforced by Jeremiah and the pitchfork, progressed at a high rate of speed along the shrubbery path, encountering *en route* Lady Knox, stooping on to her horse's neck under the sweeping branches of the laurels.

'Your horse is too high for my coverts, Lady Knox,' said the Lady of the Manor, with a malicious eye at Lady Knox's flushed face and dinged hat; 'I'm afraid you will be left behind like Absalom when the hounds go away!'

'As they never do anything here but hunt rabbits,' retorted her ladyship, 'I don't think that's likely.'

Mrs. Knox gave her donkey another whack, and passed on.

'Rabbits, my dear!' she said scornfully to Philippa. 'That's all she knows about it. I declare it disgusts me to see a woman of that age making such a Judy of herself! Rabbits indeed!'

Down in the thicket of rhododendron everything was very quiet for a time. Philippa strained her eyes in vain to see any of the riders; the horn blowing and the whip cracking passed on almost out of hearing. Once or twice a hound worked through the rhododendrons, glanced at the party, and hurried on, immersed in business. All at once Johnny, the donkey-boy, whispered excitedly:

'Look at he! Look at he!' and pointed to a boulder of grey rock that stood out among the dark evergreens. A big yellow cub was crouching on it; he instantly slid into the shelter of the bushes, and the irrepressible Jeremiah, uttering a rending shriek, plunged into the thicket after him. Two or three hounds came rushing at the sound, and after this Philippa says she finds some difficulty in recalling the proper order of events; chiefly, she confesses, because of the wholly ridiculous tears of excitement that blurred her eyes.

'We ran,' she said, 'we simply tore, and the donkey galloped, and as for that old Mrs. Knox, she was giving cracked screams to the hounds all the time, and they were screaming too; and then somehow we were all out on the road!'

What seems to have occurred was that three couple of hounds, Jeremiah Regan, and Mrs. Knox's equipage, amongst them somehow hustled the cub out of Aussolas demesne and up on to a hill on the farther side of the road. Jeremiah was sent back by his mistress to fetch Flurry, and the rest of the party pursued a thrilling course along the road, parallel with that of the hounds, who were hunting slowly through the gorse on the hillside.

'Upon my honour and word, Mrs. Yeates, my dear, we have the hunt to ourselves!' said Mrs. Knox to the panting Philippa, as they pounded along the road. 'Johnny, d'ye see the fox?'

'I do, Ma'am!' shrieked Johnny, who possessed the usual binocular vision bestowed upon his kind. 'Look at him over-right us on the hill above! Hi! The spotty dog have him! No, he's gone from him! *Gwan out o' that!*' This to the donkey, with blows that sounded like the beating of carpets, and produced rather more dust.

They had left Aussolas some half a mile behind, when, from a strip of wood on their right, the fox suddenly slipped over the

SHE HAULED WITH NO APPRECIABLE RESULT

bank on to the road just ahead of them, ran up it for a few yards and whisked in at a small entrance gate, with the three couple of hounds yelling on a red-hot scent, not thirty yards behind. The bath-chair party whirled in at their heels, Philippa and the donkey considerably blown, Johnny scarlet through his freckles, but as fresh as paint, the old lady blind and deaf to all things save the chase. The hounds went raging through the shrubs beside the drive, and away down a grassy slope towards a shallow glen, in the bottom of which ran a little stream, and after them over the grass bumped the bath-chair. At the stream they turned sharply and ran up the glen towards the avenue, which crossed it by means of a rough stone viaduct.

'"Pon me conscience he's into the old culvert!' exclaimed Mrs. Knox; 'there was one of my hounds choked there once, long ago! Beat on the donkey, Johnny!'

At this juncture Philippa's narrative again becomes incoherent, not to say breathless. She is, however, positive that it was somewhere about here that the upset of the bath-chair occurred, but she cannot be clear as to whether she picked up the donkey or Mrs. Knox, or whether she herself was picked up by Johnny while Mrs. Knox picked up the donkey. From my knowledge of Mrs. Knox I should say she picked up herself and no one else. At all events, the next salient point is the palpitating moment when Mrs. Knox, Johnny, and Philippa successively applying an eye to the opening of the culvert by which the stream trickled under the viaduct, while five dripping hounds bayed and leaped around them, discovered by more senses than that of sight that the fox was in it, and furthermore that one of the hounds was in it too.

'There's a sthrong grating before him at the far end,' said Johnny, his head in at the mouth of the hole, his voice sounding as if he were talking into a jug, 'the two of them's fighting in it; they'll be choked surely!'

'Then don't stand gabbling there, you little fool, but get in and pull the hound out!' exclaimed Mrs. Knox, who was balancing herself on a stone in the stream.

'I'd be in dread, Ma'am,' whined Johnny.

'Balderdash!' said the implacable Mrs. Knox. 'In with you!'

I understand that Philippa assisted Johnny into the culvert, and presume that it was in so doing that she acquired the two Robinson Crusoe bare footprints which decorated her jacket when I next met her.

'Have you got hold of him yet, Johnny?' cried Mrs. Knox up the culvert.

'I have, Ma'am, by the tail,' responded Johnny's voice, sepulchral in the depths.

'Can you stir him, Johnny?'

'I cannot, Ma'am, and the wather is rising in it.'

'Well, please God, they'll not open the mill dam!' remarked Mrs. Knox philosophically to Philippa, as she caught hold of Johnny's dirty ankles. 'Hold on to the tail, Johnny!'

She hauled, with, as might be expected, no appreciable result. 'Run, my dear, and look for somebody, and we'll have that fox yet!'

Philippa ran, whither she knew not, pursued by fearful visions of bursting mill-dams, and maddened foxes at bay. As she sped up the avenue she heard voices, robust male voices, in a shrubbery, and made for them. Advancing along an embowered walk towards her was what she took for one wild instant to be a funeral; a second glance showed her that it was a party of clergymen of all ages, walking by twos and threes in the dappled shade of the over-arching trees. Obviously she had intruded her sacrilegious presence into a Clerical Meeting. She acknowledges that at this awe-inspiring spectacle she faltered, but the thought of Johnny, the hound, and the fox, suffocating, possibly drowning together in the culvert, nerved her. She does not remember what she said or how she said it, but I fancy she must have conveyed to them the impression that old Mrs. Knox was being drowned, as she immediately found herself heading a charge of the Irish Church towards the scene of disaster.

Fate has not always used me well, but on this occasion it was mercifully decreed that I and the other members of the hunt should be privileged to arrive in time to see my wife and her rescue party precipitating themselves down the glen.

'Holy Biddy!' ejaculated Flurry, 'is she running a paper-chase with all the parsons? Look! Ah! will you look at my grandmother and my Uncle Eustace?'

Mrs. Knox and her sworn enemy the old clergyman, whom I had met at dinner the night before, were standing, apparently in the stream, tugging at two bare legs that projected from a hole in the viaduct, and arguing at the top of their voices. The bath-chair lay on its side with the donkey grazing beside it, on the bank a stout Archdeacon was tendering advice, and the hounds danced and howled round the entire group.

'I tell you, Eliza, you had better let the Archdeacon try,' thundered Mr. Hamilton.

'Then I tell you I will not!' vociferated Mrs. Knox, with a tug at the end of the sentence that elicited a subterranean lament from Johnny. 'Now who was right about the second grating?'

Exactly as Philippa and her rescue party arrived, the efforts of Mrs. Knox and her brother-in-law triumphed. The struggling, sopping form of Johnny was slowly drawn from the hole, drenched, speechless, but clinging to the stern of a hound, who, in its turn, had its jaws fast on the hind quarters of a limp, yellow cub.

'Oh, it's dead!' wailed Philippa, 'I *did* think I should have been in time to save it!'

'Well, if that doesn't beat all!' said Dr. Hickey.

FIELDS AND FOOTLIGHTS

BY NUTCOMBE GOULD

'CAN you shoot on Thursday? Will meet train arriving 10.15. Wire reply.' A friendly wire indeed, and irresistible to an ardent lover of what, to my mind, is the king of sports—partridge driving. I snatch up the *A.B.C.* and find that the train mentioned leaves Liverpool Street at 5.30 A.M. With very little hesitation, and a glance at my engagement tablet, I write, 'Yes, with pleasure;' and the words 'Never man sighed truer breath' find an echo in my heart, for is it not often the dweller in great cities who best knows the true delight of the country? No matter that he daily breathes the gas-laden atmosphere of a theatre, and gazes nightly on mountain and rivulet dextrously placed on a backcloth by the magic hand of the scene-painter, sniffing the odour of size as he looks from behind the footlights upon the counterfeit presentment of clover and of pine-needle. Provided that at some time or other he has earnestly probed the secrets locked in Dame Nature's breast, let him dwell where he may, her spell is on him still.

I remember once being the (stage) owner of an especially

beautiful old Castle; I have a photograph of it now. The lawn sloped gradually to the banks of a stately stream, and I nightly took a melancholy delight in 'pretending,' as the children say, to let my fishing to the leader of the orchestra, who was an ardent angler. For my estate was always heavily mortgaged. How I should like for once to play at having a property free from incumbrance! This is, however, apparently impossible. Perhaps some rising author will kindly take the hint, and write me a part that I may play nightly for a long run, and on the stage at least be free from the terrors of foreclosure. Well, I will catch this 5.30 train, and I will spend a day at the real thing; I will shoot the birds of a hospitable friend about whose financial condition I am happily ignorant, and I will come back to the gas and the size refreshed and thankful. But 5.30 is a bit early, and Liverpool Street is a distant station. A cab at 4.30 is an uncertain quantity, so I bespeak a *coupé* the night before, and, wrapped in an ulster of impenetrable Belfast tweed, I drive from Kensington to the East.

Curious glimpses of different phases of London life are unfolded as the five or six miles are traversed. I think of the warm and downy couches I am passing on one side of Piccadilly, and then look across and observe, not without a curious sense of incongruity, those recumbent figures on the seats, not twenty yards away. On through Covent Garden, already waking into life and bustle, and then into the newspaper train at Liverpool Street and I am off. A gentle relapse into slumber, and my destination seems quickly reached. Here is a dog-cart to meet me, and by eleven I am in front of my host's door, just as the guns are starting. A sandwich and a glass of sloe-gin are quickly despatched, and after a few congratulatory remarks—such as, 'This is most sporting of you!' 'Don't you feel sleepy?' &c.—addressed to me, I get into the brake with the rest. What a beautiful ideal winter's morning! Just enough frozen to whiten the ground; and look! the sun is struggling through the mist, which is quickly dispersed as a little rustling breeze springs up. How can I feel sleepy? With such a day as this to be alive on, four hours of bed are enough, and I throw my head back and snuff the air. How thankful I am that the god of fine weather has been indulgent to me! 'Twixt sunlight and limelight, verily the gulf is great! Well, let me spend to-day in the sunlight, satisfied, and hoping that the favoured few on whom the limelight falls to-night may have as serene a sense of well-earned recompense. But give me my shooting-stool; let me think only

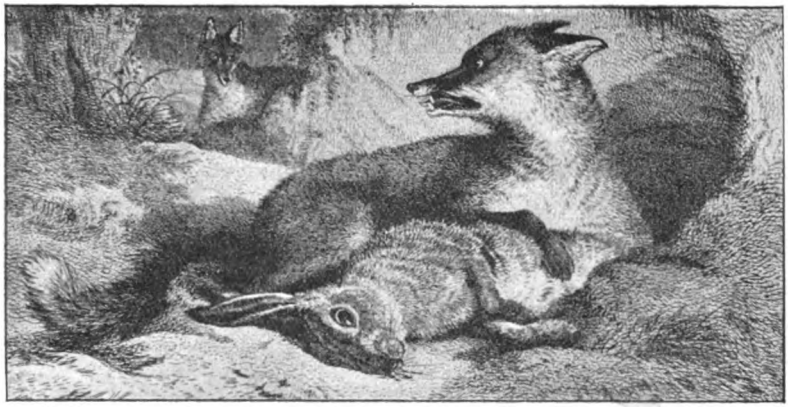
I HAVE GOT ONE IN FRONT OF ME

of the present, for it is still morning, and the evening shall take care of itself.

The beaters have gone round; I settle myself comfortably and look down the line, and am rather glad to observe that out of eight there are three who, like myself, are one-gun men. I do not expect to do more than fairly well at my favourite sport to-day; your driven partridge in January is uncommon hard to hit, and my belief is that to be 'for'ard enough' one must be always at it. I can just see the flags of the beaters several fields away, and my thoughts wander to many things—for one second only to my next part—but an involuntary 'Retro me!' escapes my lips, and I look at the delicate tones of the quickset hedge in front of me, and wonder why no manufacturer of tweeds ever seems quite to hit the right colour for a shooting-suit—the rich brown of the bark of the blackthorn, the dark green of the few remaining leaves, and the bright red of the hips and haws. A distant whistle brings me to my feet and a covey is over to my left, leaving a brace behind. Two seconds later and I have got one in front of me and missed as I turned round. Hallo! they are coming thick! Oh, for a second gun! My hands are just a trifle cold, and I seem to be fumbling terribly with my cartridges. After all, I haven't done so badly, though. I find when the drive is over that I have rather a big heap of empty cartridges at my feet, and with a kick I send all I can into the hedgerow out of sight of the head keeper, who is approaching, while secretly I am rather pleased that he should hear my neighbour say, 'Well, your journey hasn't hurt your shooting!' Three or four more drives, with varying fortune, and then to luncheon.

How long we seemed to sit, and how wasted to me appear the moments spent over that old East India sherry at the end of it! for I must leave before the shoot is over to catch the 4.30 back to town. At last the chaff is ended, the old brown sherry drunk, and I am once more standing well back from a high bullfinch. Extreme right of the line I am near the road, and in the distance I think I catch sight of the dogcart on its way to fetch me to the station. The groom, I see, draws up in answer to some signal. I know that the beaters are not far off, and my eye seeks the line of the fence. A lithe little form is gliding with amazing rapidity in and out of the tufts of grass and bramble at its base, and disappears again. I remember well the habits of my little friend the weazel, and, sneaking nearer, I make a gentle osculatory squeak on the back of my hand. Sure enough he is there again in a moment, looking inquiringly round. Shall I waste a cart-

ridge on you, little nimble depredator? No! the East India sherry has made me soft-hearted, and I stoop to throw a clod of earth. Just then a cry of 'Over!' and, taken off my guard, a covey is over me and away unarmed. A great big 'D' escapes me, but I am consoled by getting a right and left out of the next lot, and that is all the shooting that is to fall to me to-day. A hasty farewell, a pipe lit in the dogcart, and I am in the train, apologising to a fellow-passenger for changing some of my nether garments in public. I think I sleep again, and am once more in the smoke and in the smother. There is not time for anything more than a cup of tea in my dressing-room; the cry of 'Over!' is exchanged for that of 'Beginners, please!' and it seems as if 'Time that takes survey of all the world' had caught me 'mitching' out of bounds, and tossed me back to school; or have I only dreamed—and which world is the dream? The cold wind has tightened the skin on my face, and the grease-paint sits thereon with unwonted lubricatory effect. I strut and fret my hour with often a yearning thought of the supper that I know awaits me. Meanwhile an ever-forgiving and indulgent public shows no sign of vindictiveness for any appearance of fatigue or hunger that I may give evidence of, and so I end a stiffish day in the hope that many more of its like may be in store for me.



NOTES

BY 'RAPIER'

LAST shooting season I wrote so much on the subject of kills to cartridges—the percentage of game a good shot ought to account for—that I am indisposed to pursue the inquiry; but letters continue to reach me. Lord Walsingham, it may be remembered, a sportsman with a record which, I believe, is not only unequalled but unapproached, summed up by saying that anyone who consistently gathered thirty additions to the bag for one hundred cartridges fired was justly entitled to rank as a good shot; but this proportion, comforting as it may be to some of us, awakes ironical comment from not a few of my correspondents, whose friends are reputed to do infinitely better. I hear of 'better than two in five,' 'almost equal proportions of hits and misses,' and such-like scores. Some of the writers do not profess to give exact figures, and say, 'sure the total must be,' or 'certainly cannot be under,' and these statements, I must be allowed to observe, really amount to nothing. The admiring friend sees a bird fall, and often does not remember that it took a second barrel to bring it down—that, at any rate, a second barrel was put in to make sure—and this makes a difference of 50 per cent. No doubt there are not a few men who steadily kill two birds out of five shots all through the season; but—and this is the point—these are men who pick their shots; they do not loose off at very high pheasants—the very legitimate excuse 'out of reach' serves them; they do not try for low skimming pheasants, even when they are

well assured that no living creature can be in the line of fire. When rabbits flash across a ride 'Gone before I really saw it' is their reason for not firing; when badly placed for driven birds they are bearing the average in mind, and do not chance it; the same reason withholding them when they see a woodcock flitting, three parts hidden, behind thick foliage, great temptation as that always is.

A good sportsman, however, sends me some figures of actual results. He has had nothing like a big day, his longest score all through the season having been forty-five head—half the sort of total we often see killed at one stand at many places I could name. My correspondent has merely taken out his gun about his own or his neighbours' properties in Suffolk, as I understand, and during the season he fired 1,475 cartridges—a number that will seem very small to men who take down 1,000 for a three days' shoot. Here is the score, nothing being included that was not gathered.

279 pheasants	2 woodcock
139 partridges	9 pigeons
22 hares	19 wildfowl, &c.
188 rabbits	

That makes 658 head, or as nearly as possible, within an inappreciable fraction, two head of game to five cartridges. My correspondent does not consider himself a good shot, and thinks that anyone with a claim to that title should have done better; but it seems to me an exhibition of fine, consistent skill.

Several of my correspondents write to ask my ideas about the Grand National, as also about the Lincolnshire Handicap; which latter, at the time of writing, so far before the Lincoln Meeting, is too abstruse and remote a problem. As for the great steeplechases, I fancy that Manifesto must have a very great chance, but Mr. Mainwaring, the handicapper, does not agree with me. Why, then, did he give the horse 12 st. 7 lb.? it might be asked; but the answer is simple and obvious. Something had to carry 12 st. 7 lb., and that something could not possibly be anything except Manifesto; indeed, there was much speculation as to whether he would not have 12 st. 10 lb. Mr. Mainwaring, however, is of opinion that, though the burden has been successfully carried once, by Cloister, the feat is not likely to be repeated, at any rate until there arises some giant in the land. Gentle Ida was another animal that struck me as likely, especially as she

won the three-mile flat race at Sandown, success in which has more than once or twice pointed to the Liverpool winner. There seems to be a doubt, however—at least, so I am told—as to whether the mare will stand a preparation.

Cathal was second last year with 11 st. 5 lb., and has only 2 lb. more to carry. He was second also (10 st. 9 lb.) in 1895, with Manifesto (11 st. 2 lb.), fourth, a good many lengths behind him; and Mr. Reginald Ward thinks that with a little luck last year he might have won. Shifty as the horse is, he seems to give his running at Liverpool, and must obviously be dangerous; but he is beginning to show symptoms of age. There is no saying what that good, gallant little mare, Parma Violet, cannot do, improving as she does; but 11 st. 6 lb. is a heavy weight, and though the entries for the Grand Military Gold Cup are not made at the time of writing, she is sure to run for that race, and may earn a penalty. It is said that she was sold because she could not make her former stable-companion, Shaker, gallop, and the statement is true. She has come on, no doubt; but so probably has he, and with 11 st. 5 lb. he would be one of the few I should pick. Xebee I consider very severely handicapped, and we saw at Sandown that he knows how to fall. County Council with the same weight (11 st. 4 lb.) is not to be despised, but it is not certain that he will stay the course. Grudon is well in, and one of the best judges I know thinks highly of his prospects. The Soarer is a former winner, not overweighted with 10 st. 10 lb., but I always considered him very lucky to win, and unlikely to do so a second time. Timon was so very near winning a couple of years ago that, if all is well with him, he might actually win this time. Ford of Fyne and Barcalwhey have also been near, but Major Orr-Ewing is inclined to think that he rather overrated his horse; and Barcalwhey never seems quite to last. I hear that Queen Bee is a good mare, but I doubt her being good enough to win a National. Stalker is decidedly well in; he is a horse I should certainly take in a lot; and the Prince of Wales' five-year-old Ambush II. distinguished himself at Sandown; that was a slow muddling race, however, and five-year-olds so very rarely last the course at Liverpool that I do not much fancy him. Old stagers who *might* create a surprise are Seaport II. and Sheriff Hutton; but it seems impossible, though the latter is much thought of in Gloucestershire. In spite of last year I do not at all fancy Drogheda. There is material for a most interesting race, it will be seen.

The Grand Military Gold Cup, the winning of which is an object of so much anxiety and ambition among soldiers who have a love of cross-country sport, will be a particularly interesting race this month. I am writing at a disadvantage, for these Notes go to press three weeks before the event, and all sorts of chops and changes take place in that time. So far as at present appears, however, we shall see at the post Mr. Campbell's Parma Violet, 12 st. 10 lb., with Captain Yardley up; Mr. Eustace Loder's Sitric, who will, I expect, be ridden by Major Hughes Onslow; Major Fenwick's County Council possibly, but this is doubtful, as he would have to carry 14 st., which seems prohibitive; Mr. H. A. Johnstone's Boreen, lately known as Boreenchreeogue, a name that Mr. Johnstone, as it seems to me very wisely, has bisected. Boreenchreeogue, I am told, means 'the lane that leads to the happy spot,' but 'boreen'—the lane—is quite enough! Mr. Reginald Ward, all being well, will ride, and Boreen's friends in Ireland (who perhaps do not realise how much Parma Violet has come on of late) think he will win. Mr. Murray-Threipland will run one of his, and, of course, there may be a smart maiden with advantages; but, so far as can be seen, I fancy the issue should be between Parma Violet and Boreen.

I had a letter the other day from my friend in France whom I have on several occasions quoted as being a specially excellent judge of racing. He writes:—'I really cannot believe in the possibility of Holocauste winning the Derby. He is surely too heavy in the shoulders, too upright, and too short, to make a Derby winner. Flying Fox has, I think, beaten better opponents than Holocauste has ever met, for the horses that have run behind the grey in France have been distinctly commoners. He has been a lucky horse, but I cannot rate him as a good one. Of course, if your English horses are *very* bad, Holocauste will beat them—it is nonsense to assert that a horse will not win a given race; but if the colt wins at Epsom it will very much surprise me. We missed our chance of victory when Le Sancy's other grey son, Palmiste, was not sent. He was, I am convinced, a far superior horse to Holocauste, and I firmly believe would have beaten Galtee More had he tried to do so.' It will be seen from this that my friend regards and sums up between English and French horses impartially and without prejudice.

THE
BADMINTON MAGAZINE
April 1899

THE PRIEST'S POOL

BY K. A. WARDROPP

'It is no use, your honour, fishing any more now below this; it is all shallow water till you come to the "Poll-an-Tsagairt."'

'Very well, Tony,' I replied, reeling in my line; 'it is getting late at any rate, so we'll make straight across to the pool and try a final cast there.'

'The Priest's Pool, your honour? May the saints protect us! but sure you'd niver think of fishing there? It is no use whativer, and will be bringin' ye no luck.'

I looked up in astonishment that such a sentiment should come from the lips of the trusty Tony, whose enthusiasm as a follower of the gentle art was only rivalled by my own, and whose sanguine disposition and continued anticipations of luck had buoyed me up all day.

'How now, Tony,' I said, 'why is it no use? It was not an hour ago I heard you say the river was full of fish; there is nothing to stop them running up as far as this, is there?'

'That may be, your honour thin, that may be; but the fish will not stop there, and it's certain I am there will not be one in the pool at all, so where would be the use of your honour wasting his time fishing it?'

I was somewhat surprised at the evident discouragement in Tony's words, and something in the way he spoke roused in me an indescribable feeling of suspicion, which was not allayed by

my subsequent observations; for during this conversation I had been walking rapidly in the direction of the pool, followed by the reluctant Tony, and as we reached a spot on the height above, from which it came suddenly into view, a salmon leapt out of the water right below us, and fell back with a loud splash which was more eloquent than any argument on my part could have been. 'There now, Tony,' said I, 'what about there being no fish here? and see, there's another showing his fin just beyond the eddy!'

'Ah well, sir, there may be fish—I will not jist be saying there is no fish, but I would not meddle wid them. It will be a very awkward place to cast from, and the rocks is very slippery and dangerous for gaffing a fish off.'

By this time my suspicions were fairly confirmed. The man had tried to deceive me. I felt persuaded that for some reason or other he was bent on dissuading me from fishing this particular pool, and the more convinced I became of his resolve the more determined I was to thwart it. So ignoring him entirely, I selected a new fly from my book, with the remark that I thought it was a good one and ought to fetch them.

'The fly is good enough, sir,' chimed in Tony, 'but if you hook the "Tiasg-draoidheachta," you'll niver see the ghost of it again. It's the truth I'm spakin', sir.'

'Hook the what, Tony?' I asked in astonishment.

'Just the witch of the pool thin, your honour; and it is no tackle that will hould her at all, and I'm tellin' you it is not safe to try it, for the pool is bewitched. There's thim that has lost their lives in it before now, so be warned, sir, be warned.'

Tony was growing enigmatical, and all the time there was something in his voice which made me feel the man was in earnest; all the same I was not going to be fooled by what was most likely some ridiculous superstition of the peasantry; so, despairing of future co-operation on his part, I had throughout our conversation been making observations relating to the topography of the place.

There was a rock on my left that formed a fall over which the water leapt, a height of from fifteen to twenty feet; below this the water surged and eddied in two great basins, one designated the 'upper' and the other the 'lower' pool. Out of these the stream flowed into a long narrow channel for a distance of about three hundred yards, at which juncture it was divided into two courses by a huge rock which lay in the middle of the water and formed a small island there. At this spot, too, the lower

bank of the river took a sudden bend, turning at right angles to the rock, and then with a wide sweep resuming its former course. It would have been impossible to fish from the opposite bank; from that on which I stood it looked difficult enough, but from a ledge of the rock down which I cautiously crept I could command a position which would enable me to cover either of the two pools with my fly; so steadying myself against the rock I managed, by the aid of the deft 'spey cast,' to send my line flying out across the upper pool.

My first attempt met with no result, my second brought no better luck; but the third time I watched my fly light on the water beneath the opposite ledge of rock; and just as the eddy caught it, and seemed to be sucking it down, there was a swirl in the water and an ominous tightening of the line by which I knew my fish was hooked.

'I am into him now, Tony,' I cried; 'be ready below there with the gaff in case you get a chance at him as he runs by.' Tony did not stir; but scarcely had the words left my lips, than my fish made a rush through the lower pool, and made headlong down the channel.

It took me all my time to scramble up the rocks and follow him from above, and he played out the line as fast as it would run off the reel. I was no novice at this game, and many years' experience as a fisherman, though it has not taught me to tell accurately the weight of a fish before he is grassed, has enabled me to make a fair guess at it. There was a peculiar strain on the rod, a particular quiver of the line, which assured me at once this was a heavy fish. I dared not give him too much of the butt in the first rush, though I fished with a well-seasoned eighteen-foot rod, and knew my tackle was the best, but I kept a good hold on him and followed as well as I could.

We were getting near the bend of the river where the island is, and I tried to check him there and turn his head; but my efforts were useless. This was the corner I dreaded, so I gave him the butt and risked my tackle holding. Still he ran till he entered the nearer of the two courses I have described, and just as he turned the angle of the river before mentioned, and I had resolved to give him his head again, and was scrambling over the rough ground in hot pursuit, I felt the strain suddenly relax, and experienced that sickening feeling of disappointment known to every angler at the moment when he first realises that his prize is lost.

My first impulse was to look round for Tony, who, to my

surprise, I beheld standing where I had left him, on the height above the lower pool, and in full view of all my movements. He had evidently never stirred from the spot. I walked dejectedly back towards him, and as I approached I saw him cross himself and heard him ejaculate something in his native tongue.

'That was a pity, Tony,' I said; 'I'm sorry I lost him, he seemed an unusually large fish.'

'Large fish! Beghorra, she was no ordinary fish at all, she was just the "Tiasg-draoidheachta" your honour hooked, and no mistake. But there is no taking her, no; no taking her.' Tony was visibly excited, and when he meant to be specially impressive he had a way of always repeating the last words of his sentence.

By this time the light was rapidly failing, and it was too late to resume fishing, even had I been so inclined; so I bade Tony shoulder my rod, and we started across the bog in the direction of the house. I kept turning over in my mind the events of the day and all Tony's mysterious allusions to the thing he called the 'Tiasg-draoidheachta.' There was evidently something behind it all, and I supposed he had referred to some water-kelpie or other mythical denizen of the pool. He was striding along in silence beside me, and noting his evident reserve I approached the subject again with some degree of caution.

'Tell me, Tony,' I asked in somewhat conciliatory tones, 'what is the Cheensg-Dhreenedhtha, or whatever you call it, that haunts the Priest's Pool? There is some strange story connected with it, isn't there? and I want to hear all about it.'

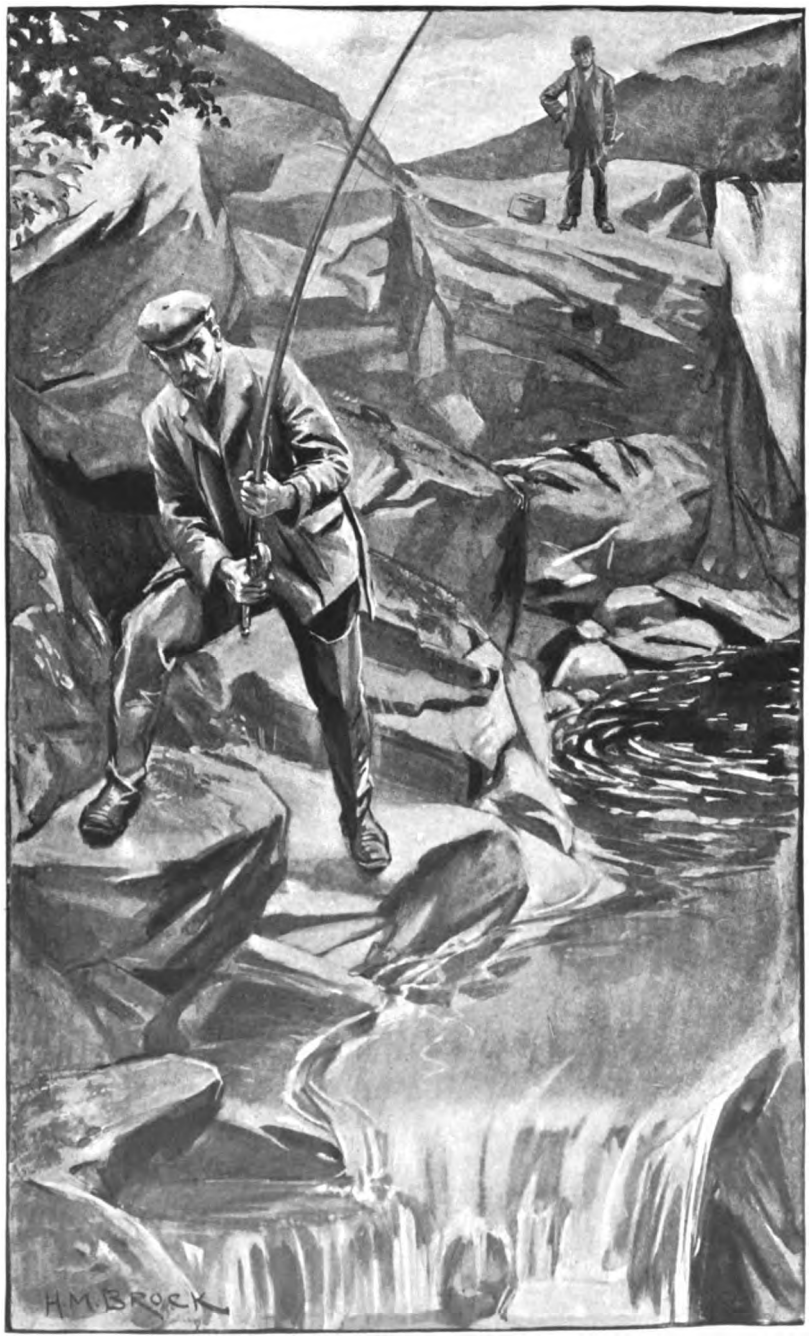
'Will thin, sir, it's the truth I'll tell you,' he answered. 'It's a curse there is on that place, for it's there the priest sold his sowl to the divil, and it's in that very pool the "Draoidheachta" stops, and it is not safe to venture there after dark, no, nor in the daytime neither, so it is not; and thim that fishes there, has nothing but ill luck, as I tould ye before, sir. 'Tis the priest himself that was drowned there, and the laird's brother after him, and maybe many more that niver was heard of.'

'But have you ever seen a fish lost there before then, Tony?'

'Faith have I, sir, and me father too; he has seen the very same; she will always be running to the very same place, and be lost at the island. May the holy Virgin protect us!'

It needed but a little more encouragement, supported by a diplomatic tip, and I had Tony fairly launched into the story. I do not remember ever having listened to a more weird one, or one that impressed me more.

I am well aware that, in repeating Tony's narrative, it must



HE PLAYED OUT THE LINE AS FAST AS IT WOULD RUN OFF THE REEL

lose much of its original force. The Celt possesses a marvellous power of expression, and a certain subtilty of speech which it is impossible to reproduce. It is partly due, perhaps, to that hereditary gift of verbal transmission to which we owe our stock of legendary lore, and which still lingers amongst the race; aided, too, by a dramatic instinct which is combined with the natural musical cadence of the voice, the mystic tones of which add a certain subtle charm. Being also unfamiliar with Tony's vernacular idiom, it will be best to make no attempt to repeat his tale verbatim, but to record it as faithfully as possible in my own words.

The estate of 'K——' has been in possession of the Patrick family for many generations. It was in the time of the present laird's grandfather—some 100 years ago—that the subject of the story lived. He was a certain parish priest named 'Murphy,' and, it appears, a most ardent fisherman, devoting himself to piscatorial in place of theological research. He was a worshipper, in fact, of the rod and line, which form of idolatry caused his downfall, and finally brought about his destruction. Everything was sacrificed to it, and so much time did he devote to the pursuit of his favourite sport, that there was very little left for the performance of his clerical duties—the priestly offices, indeed, seemed to have been sadly neglected. Father Murphy was never at home by day, and often absent by night; so the people were left unvisited and the penitents unconfessed. The sick folk waited in vain for his appearance, and many a sinner died without receiving the last consolations or hearing the cheering words of absolution breathed o'er the dying-bed. In fact, it was related that the assembled congregation in chapel waited vainly one morning for the priest, who never came. When at such times he should have been discharging the duties of a faithful pastor to his flock, the truant priest was wandering, rod in hand, on the banks of some stream, too much absorbed in his favourite sport to cast a thought to his neglected people. This continued neglect of his duties increased, until the office of priest became a mere sinecure, and the people grew so deeply mortified, that somehow the saying got abroad amongst them that 'Father Murphy would sell his soul to the divil himself in ixchange for a single salmon.'

Well, it so happened that one day, when the priest was absent on an excursion of the usual kind, his old mother, with whom he resided, was seized with some sudden sickness of a fatal nature. Knowing that she had but a few hours to live, she called at once

for her son. A lad was instantly dispatched to fetch him, and knowing the priest's favourite haunts, he made straight for the river's bank, and came upon him casting over his favourite pool, which was the one called by Tony the 'Poll-an-Tsagairt,' where I had hooked my fish. The lad gave his message; but Father Murphy had just seen a fish rise to his fly, and was not going to leave without giving him another chance; so he told the boy to run home and say he would follow immediately. An hour passed, and the old woman, who was growing rapidly weaker, implored those round her to fetch her son, that she might receive absolution and obtain his blessing before she died. A second time the lad was sent, and this time found the priest playing a salmon in the same pool. He told him how his mother was dying and crying out for him, but Father Murphy was not going to sacrifice an hour's sport and lose a good fish, so he bade the lad run back quickly and say he would come in a minute.

The hours passed, the old woman's life was rapidly ebbing, yet the priest never came. 'Go,' she said at last, 'tell him I cannot live long, and ask if he would wish my soul in torment, and earn a mother's dying curse for the sake of a single fish.'

The man who conveyed this message found the priest on the same spot still fighting the salmon, which was sulking in the bottom of the pool. He repeated the dying woman's words, and as he did so, it is said that the fish showed itself for one second on the surface of the water, and was seen to be no ordinary salmon, but something of phenomenal size. On observing this, the priest turned round and pronounced some such words as these: 'Go then, run back to the old woman, and tell her I would sooner sell my own soul to the devil than lose such a fish.'

When the dying woman received this message a fearful look came into her face, and she seemed to be animated for the time with a fresh infusion of strength. Raising herself on her couch, she ordered those around her to carry her to the place where her son was. 'If he will not come to me,' she cried, 'it is I must go to him.'

Tony's grandfather was one of those who helped to carry her, and he, Tony, seemed never to have forgotten the impression made on him by his father's relation of it, just as it had been described to him by *his* father before him. He told, in graphic and awe-inspiring words, how the solemn procession wended its way across the bog towards the river's banks, and how the wail of the winds across the moorland, the gathering darkness around,

SHE PRONOUNCED THE MOST WITHERING CURSES ON HER SON

the distant murmur of thunder, predicted the coming storm, and cast a dreadful gloom o'er the scene.

When they reached the pool the procession stopped, and then the dying woman summoned up all her remaining strength, and, raising herself to her feet, stood up tall and gaunt against the darkening sky on the ledge of rock below which the priest still stood. Then, raising both hands on high, she drew herself to her fullest height, and calling upon Heaven as witness, pronounced in shrill, unearthly tones, the most withering curses on her son, and on the place on which he stood; then her whole frame seemed to tremble in a fearful paroxysm, and with writhing limbs, and distorted features, she fell back lifeless on the ground.

It must have been a gruesome scene indeed, but worse is still to come. The storm, which it is said had all the time been gathering, now burst with relentless fury on the heads of the trembling group. The lightning played and flashed overhead, and peal upon peal of thunder rent the air. Then suddenly there came an awful crash; the terrified group crouched lower round the lifeless corpse, and hid their faces in fear. When they ventured to look up again, and were able to realise what had occurred, they saw that the huge projecting mass of rock upon which Father Murphy had stood was carried bodily away, and that the priest had vanished with it. When the storm had abated, a search party was sent out, and his lifeless body was found in the pool. It was apparent then that a huge landslip had occurred, and that the mass of rock that had become detached is that which now forms an island in the centre of the stream.

That was the gist of the tale, and in a mysterious whisper Tony added, that since that day the place had been shunned; it was a cursed spot, he said, and the priest's soul incarnate somehow in the body of a gigantic fish called the 'Tiasg-draoidheachta' still haunted the pool.

But there was a sequel; it came from Tony in subdued and awe-struck tones, and told how the present laird's only brother had been drowned in that same pool. 'He had been after thrying some of his thricks,' Tony said, 'to defeat the divil,' but had forfeited his life. 'The ould laird, his father, was niver the same after it,' he added, 'and since Master Douglas (that's him that's the laird now) succeeded, he has niver been known to go near the spot.' Tony crossed himself reverently as he ended his narrative, and we came within sight of the house.

I confess that during its recitation a half-credulous spell seemed cast upon me, as we wended our way across the lonely

moor on that grey September evening, with the lengthening shadows deepening round us, and the young moon struggling out from the wreaths of mist that clothed the mountains.

The cheerful blaze of a log fire, and the welcome rattle of tea-cups which greeted me as I entered, speedily dissolved the spell, however, and I was soon inclined to laugh at my own credulity. I had, of course, to own to my want of luck, though I thought it best, after what Tony had said, to make no reference before my host or hostess to my adventures at the 'Priest's Pool.' I wanted, nevertheless, to get at the facts, and determined to question Major Carroll about it, as he owned the neighbouring property, and was to dine with us that night. He was an old friend of mine, and I knew him to be a man of culture, both shrewd and intelligent, and not likely to be biassed by the superstitious instincts of his race.

The opportunity came after the ladies had retired, and we got a quiet corner of the smoking-room to ourselves. I told him then of my experience, and asked him what amount of truth there was in the tale I had heard. 'The story,' he said, 'is true enough in outline, and, like many an Irish legend, has its foundation in truth. It *is* true that the Celtic mind is full of romance, and stored with superstitious beliefs, so that strange fantastic fancies weave themselves round facts, and are difficult to separate eventually; but still I can vouch for the truth of this tradition, if you like to call it so. Well, I will tell you what I know, and then you can judge for yourself.

'Douglas Patrick and I were boys together, and the old man, his father I mean, often told us the tale as it was related to him in his own boyhood, and stripped of all its exaggerations. There were lots of old people living about the place in his day who remembered the event, and Tony's grandfather was among them.

'I believe, too, it happened pretty much as they say. Those who know the Irish character at all could easily understand the old woman's vindictive wrath, and picture her striking and terrible attitude as she stood out upon the height and uttered her last malediction. They know how to curse properly, these old women and "Bodachs," and when occasion requires curses flow from their lips as readily as blessings.

'That night, too, must have been a memorable one. I could point out to you still the places where the storm played most havoc; it is quite evident, too, that the gigantic rock which forms an island in the stream below the Priest's Pool is the result of a

landslip, and that it once formed part of the cliff above. That it should have gone down with the priest upon it, at the very moment the curse was uttered, is certainly a strange coincidence. Still there is no impossibility in the fact.'

'But what about the drowning incident?' I asked. 'I never knew before that Douglas had a brother.'

'Yes, I'm coming to that,' said the Major. 'That part of it is no less strange than the first. It happened twenty years ago now, and Douglas never speaks of it. He had a younger brother called Neil, quite a young fellow, and a sub. in my own regiment. He had run down here on a few days' leave before the regiment left for India, and being always keener about fishing than shooting, he went out the very first day and fished the Priest's Pool. That day, and the one following, he hooked a fish and lost him at the same spot, opposite the "Priest's Island," and I suppose where the same thing occurred to you to-day. He knew the tradition, of course, but it only increased his ardour. He was a determined young fellow, and set to work at once to puzzle out the reason why no fish hooked in that pool was ever landed. His brother Douglas had never attempted to fish it. He said jokingly that Tony would not allow him; but I think he really nursed secret suspicions as to the efficacy of the curse—the result of tales told him in childhood, and he avoided the place with traditional distrust. But Neil somehow overcame his scruples; he had drawn out a plan of the place, and formed his own theories as to the cause of the superstition about the bewitched fish. He believed that at the bend of the river opposite the Priest's Island, where the fish is always lost, there must be some unseen impediment, some sharp edge, perhaps of rock or stone, which came in contact with the tackle. If, after hooking a fish, it could be prevented from running round that bend, he was certain it could be quite safely landed.

'Neil had a steady head, so having lowered himself by means of a rope over the cliff, he dropped gently into the water, and with one swift stroke landed on the island. It was a nasty place to land, being, as I dare say you noticed, a mere conical-shaped rock; but there was a niche which just allowed him foothold, and from this place he prepared to splash the stream, and so turn the fish, if it attempted to run past.

'All happened as he had planned. Douglas, fishing from the pool below the waterfall, hooked his fish, which ran with him, in the usual manner, through the channel, making straight for the place where Neil was. As it approached, Neil was seen to raise

his stick or flail, and begin splashing the water! What happened after this, no one ever rightly knew. Neil, in his excitement, must have lost his balance, or suddenly grown giddy: Douglas only remembered seeing him miss his footing, and fall headlong into the water.

'He was an expert swimmer, but the current is swift just there, and it seemed to have snatched him at once, and hurled him down the stream. Douglas rushed after him of course, and, some hundred yards lower down, he plunged into the water and managed to get him out. But the poor young fellow was quite dead; there was an ugly cut on his forehead which told its own tale; he must have struck against some rock, and been rendered insensible at once.

'It was a sad event, and cast quite a gloom over the place. Of course the peasantry looked upon it as a kind of judgment, and said he had tempted Providence. Poor Douglas blamed himself, and grew quite morbid on the subject, which is never mentioned in his presence. He has never approached the spot, they tell me, since.'

'Has the pool, then, been fished since?' I asked.

'Not in Douglas Patrick's lifetime,' replied the Major. 'I believe, however, when he was abroad, and the fishing at K—— let, one or two attempts were made, with the same results that you met with. No; it is a curious fact, account for it as you like, that, since the curse was pronounced, no one has *ever* succeeded in landing a salmon hooked in that pool. So you can understand now, perhaps, Tony's reluctance to approach the spot.'

'It is a strange tale altogether,' I said, as the Major ended and knocked the ashes from his pipe. 'I was sceptical enough at Tony's story; but, by all that's wonderful, I begin to think there is something in it after all. Good night, Major.'

'Good night.'

The following day I was being whirled along in the Dublin express, having been unexpectedly recalled to duty.

I had time for reflection during that journey, and my thoughts all centred round the mysterious pool and its strange weird story.

I, too, had had my theories, like poor Neil, but, since my conversation with the Major, I had abandoned them all.

It is the tendency of this scientific age to profess to account for everything, yet there are still some things unexplained, call them Phenomena if we will.

If, after all, men believed in the unseen powers at all, there

must be evil and malign as well as beneficent influences; and might not some such subtle force be granted power to work under certain conditions, in certain defined and specified regions? Well, it might be so, but I should leave the definition to metaphysicians, and take the safe side with Tony and the rest who err it may be ignorantly!

'I declare,' said my wife, when I gave voice to some such thoughts, 'the superstitious atmosphere of the district has quite affected you.'

'Perhaps it has,' I said, 'perhaps it has, but still,

> There are more things in heaven and earth
> Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.'

BAD SHOTS

BY PERCY STEPHENS

A FEW months ago it was my privilege to attempt to describe in the pages of the BADMINTON MAGAZINE the fearful pleasure enjoyed by the bad horsemen and nervous riders who form such a large percentage of the hunting field; and even to crave a little sympathy on their behalf from those who, more happily endowed by temperament or fortune, are wont to despise their weaker brethren. But I confess that in dealing with bad shots one is at a loss to find any excuses for that numerous class whose lack of skill with the gun exposes them to the derision and contempt of their more successful companions. It is manifestly impossible to draw any real comparison between the man who is a bad rider and the one who is a bad shot; for not only are hunting and shooting two totally different amusements, demanding equally varied qualities of both mind and body from those who engage in them, but while the bad rider to hounds fails from want of nerve and not skill, it is purely the lack of the latter requirement which proves a stumbling block to the unsuccessful shooter. Indeed, want of nerve or shyness is a failing to which bad shots must

be absolute strangers; for I never remember to have come across one of them who, given an opportunity of displaying his incapacity, did not at once eagerly avail himself of the chance. After all, however, there is nothing disgraceful in being a bad shot: it is only the refusal honestly to admit the fact that involves any stigma at all.

A cynical friend once laid down the axiom that there are only two kinds of bad shots, those who are inimical to human life and those who are not; but, without going quite so far as this, I think they may be fairly divided into two classes, the honest and the dishonest, and I am afraid that in shooting, as in other walks of life, the former are distinctly in a minority. Let us, however, deal with them first.

The 'honest' bad shot is, as a rule, a good fellow, as often as not a thorough *sportsman*, who, while devoted to shooting and losing no opportunity of indulging in it, has long recognised his own incapacity, and makes no effort to conceal it. No amount of ill-success, no, not the experience of a lifetime, seems to damp his ardour: year after year he cheerfully goes on missing without ever becoming discouraged; he will shoot until his gun is red-hot without ever touching a feather, will eagerly repeat the performance at the earliest possible opportunity, and, 'rebus angustis animosus atque fortis,' meets the rebuffs of fortune with a smile that is half a sigh. Nor is he unduly elated when, as occasionally happens to even the most hopeless 'duffer,' the fickle goddess grants him the momentary delight of a 'gallery' shot that would do credit to a de Grey or a Walsingham, but cheerfully admits it was 'all luck;' and for such a philosopher as this his more skilful brethren can feel nothing but respect, tinged with a sympathetic pity.

I can, however, recall an occasion when one of the most philosophical of bad shots abandoned his habitual self-possession and exhibited a sense of personal resentment, as unreasoning as it was unexpected, towards game he had failed to account for. It was at a grouse drive rather late in the season, and a huge straggling pack of many score of birds bore straight down on his butt. The gentleman in question, who, if a bad hitter, was an undeniably fine shooter, contrived, by opening fire when the birds were fifty yards off, to discharge no fewer than six barrels at them, without, however, any apparent result. For a moment he seemed absolutely paralysed with disgust at his own incompetence, and then turning round he shook his fist furiously in the direction of the disappearing birds.

'Confound you, you brutes!' he screamed. '*You wait till my brother Tom comes here next week*, he'll tickle your tails for you!'

Still driven grouse in October are easily missed by far more pretentious sportsmen than the one in question. But another notoriously bad shot of a past generation used curiously enough to experience his chief difficulty in killing hares, an animal which to most people offers the easiest of marks. Many bad shots, moreover, are terribly prone to hit the poor brutes 'behind,' and send them away with broken legs to die a lingering and painful death; but X——, as we will christen him, used to miss them fairly and cleanly. Every year he was invited to a large shoot in the South of England, where hares formed the chief item of the bag—there *were* hares in the land in those days—and where his lack of skill had come to be a sort of proverb, to form the subject of much good-natured chaff, which he, being a good fellow, used to enjoy as much as anyone. However, on one occasion he managed to score off both hares and scoffers alike; for, being placed alone *inside* the fence of a long straggling wood which was being beaten up to him, he noticed only one smeuse in the hedge, with a well-defined hare track leading up to it. On reflection X——, who, whatever his shortcomings as a shooter, was by no means devoid of natural acumen, cut a small twig, cleft it, stuck an old envelope into it, and then, placing it in the smeuse, retired behind a neighbouring tree to await events.

Ere long there was a pattering of feet on the fallen leaves, and a great bouncing hare came cantering up to its accustomed exit, only to become transfixed with astonishment on beholding the piece of paper, which it promptly sat up on its stern to inspect. Now was the wily X——'s opportunity, of which he was not slow to successfully avail himself; for even *he* could not miss a sitting hare at twenty yards. More hares soon followed, only to go through the same performance and share the same fate, until at last, sated with slaughter, delightful and unusual experience as it was, X—— pulled up his bit of paper, strewed the corpses of his victims in a wider radius, and coolly awaited the arrival of the rest of the party, whose astonishment can be better imagined than described when, in answer to their facetious inquiries as to the result of his recent fusillade, he calmly pointed to the corpses of no fewer than twenty-five hares! more than he had ever yet succeeded in killing in the whole of a season's shooting.

But that X—— made a full confession after dinner, the same

'YOU WAIT TILL MY BROTHER COMES'

evening, I am afraid I could hardly have included him in the category of 'honest' bad shots!

Unhappily, plentiful as bad shots of all sorts are, the proportion of 'honest' ones among them is so small as scarcely to leaven the mass, and I must regretfully pass on to that far more numerous body of shooting men who, while equally unskilful in the use of the gun, are too weak-minded or self-conscious to admit their inferiority. As a general rule these are not such hopelessly bad shots, but are highly strung, nervous individuals who can shoot just well enough to flatter themselves they ought to do better; and consequently, as their bump of self-esteem never permits them to attribute their incapacity to its real cause—*i.e.* themselves—they always seek to lay the blame of it on somebody or something else. This is the more remarkable when it is remembered that in all forms of sport—as opposed to mere pastime—shooting is pre-eminently the one in which success depends almost entirely on the capability of the shooter himself. The hunting man who is disinclined to admit his own shortcomings can generally saddle them—no pun is intended—on the animal he bestrides; the angler, though belonging to a class notorious for want of veracity (unjustly in my opinion), can always find an excuse for his empty creel in the forces of nature: too much or too little water, bright sun, and so forth. But the unhappy gunner alone can blame nobody but himself for missing what he fires at; and being, after all, only human, it is this very defencelessness (if I may employ such a term) which prompts him to invent some more or less fictitious reason to palliate his incapacity. Either his cartridges are badly loaded, or his coat is too tight in the shoulders; he had some bad champagne for dinner last night, or he cut his trigger finger when shaving this morning; that beastly dog of Jones' got in the light just as he was going to fire, or who could shoot with that infernal keeper roaring 'Mark!' every time a bird rose?

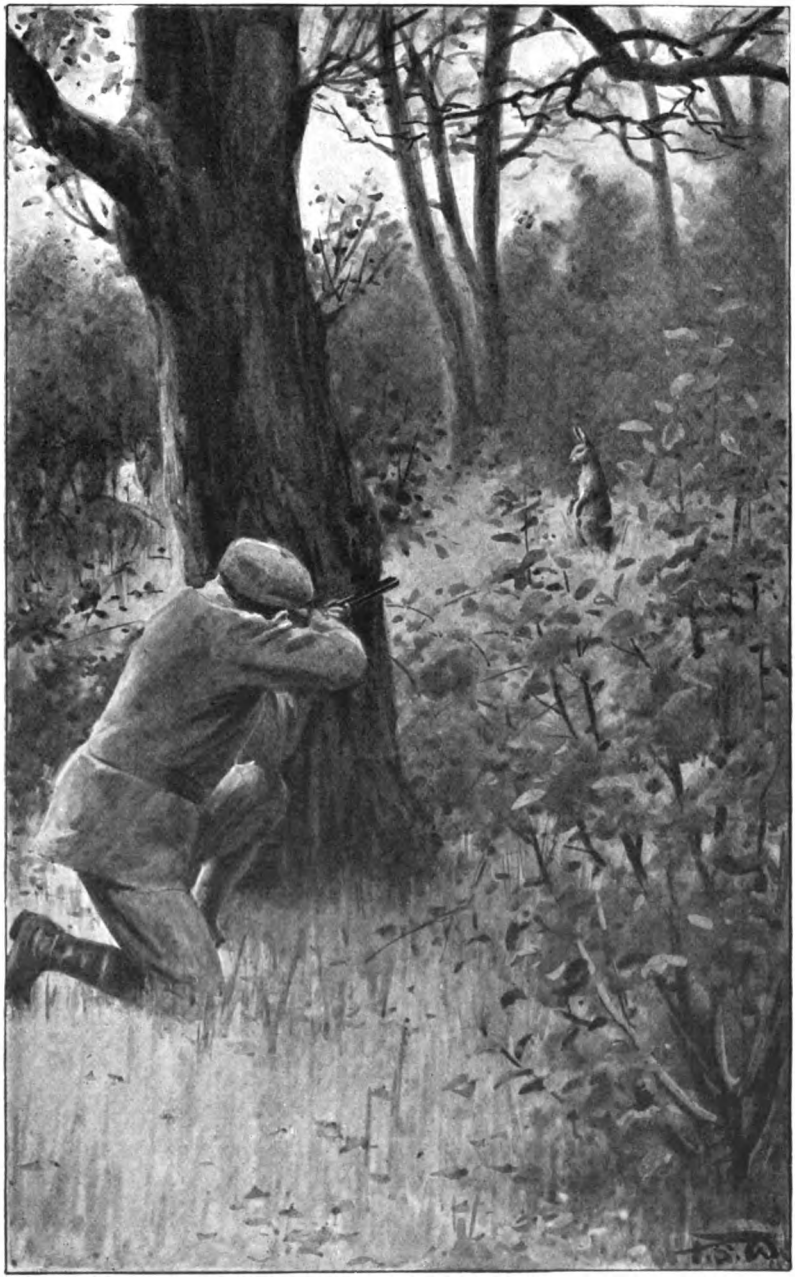
The above are fair samples of the excuses offered for their bad shooting by this class of gunner; but more annoying still is their disinclination to admit they ever really miss! Indeed, many of them, *horribile dictu*, seem to think that it redounds more to their credit as sportsmen to claim that they have wounded and not gathered the game they fire at, rather than incur the odious—to them—accusation of a clean miss. Are they walking up partridges, you hear them frantically appealing to the rest of the party to 'mark that bird,' said bird being probably very frightened, but otherwise happily unscathed; at a grouse drive or a covert shoot

they have always a dozen down, but have only gathered one; the remainder, 'cut to pieces,' having all fallen just out of sight; and people unacquainted with their little idiosyncrasies are sometimes seduced into wasting ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in hunting for their purely imaginary dead birds. Of one thing they are always positive, and that is that a bird can never be a 'runner,' as it invariably has a 'leg down.'

I once heard a good story of one of these gentry who, posted at the end of a covert, at a certain famous North-country shoot, fired shot after shot at a string of pheasants driven over him, without the slightest fatal effect. I say 'fatal' advisedly; for, although not one of the unfortunate birds fell, most of them showed by a twist of their tails that they had been wounded in that portion of their bodies. Now the head keeper on that estate was an old and privileged individual of a choleric temperament, who liked to see his game killed dead or missed clean, and he could not contain himself when the excited shooter eagerly informed him that he had a score of birds down just over the brow of a little hill, under which he had been standing. Old William regarded the gentleman in silence for a moment, while a violent struggle between his politeness and his temper raged within him. At last the latter got the better of him; he could not help himself: 'A score doon!' he spluttered forth in broad Northumbrian. 'Ef they phayzants had nabbut cam' oot aisy-versy (tail foremost), ye micht ha' killed a hoondred!'

This class of shooter is, as a rule, a great exponent of the 'my bird' method of increasing his own score at the expense of other people, a form of dishonesty in which he is often aided by a marauding retriever, and which he practises most successfully in grouse driving. There is probably no sort of shooting in which men shoot so jealously as this, nor one which lends itself more easily to these little frauds; and I fancy that few sportsmen who ever indulge in it will fail to recall some more or less heated controversy over the ownership of a dead bird; not, however, that these little squabbles are by any means confined to bad shots.

In connection with this subject I was once an eye-witness of a most beautiful instance of retributive justice. A very keen hand had unblushingly annexed one of his neighbour's dead grouse, and, despite the latter's loud remonstrances, absolutely refused to surrender it. Both parties soon waxed warm, and there is no knowing to what lengths the matter might eventually have gone, had not the injured party's loader gently pulled his



IT PROMPTLY SAT UP

master's coat tail: 'Never mind, sir,' he whispered, 'let him have it. *I've got two of his.*'

Another unpleasant failing of this class of shooter is their jealousy, though I must frankly admit that *bad* shots cannot claim a monopoly of this agreeable attribute. When asked to walk through a covert with the beaters, for the purpose of killing ground game, they cannot refrain from plastering the pheasants as they rise, instead of leaving them to meet their legitimate fate as rocketers at the hands of the forward guns; if walking up partridges in line, they deem it their right to loose off at everything that rises in or out of range of their guns, and they will do their best to spoil their neighbour's chances at a grouse or partridge drive by firing at his birds before they are even within shot of him. Parenthetically, I have heard it remarked, but decline to vouch for the accuracy of the allegation, that clergymen are some of the worst offenders in this respect, and it is certainly curious that men who in every other branch of life not only preach, but so worthily practise, their duty towards their neighbour, should only fail to remember it as soon as they get a gun in their hands. Still everyone is so pleased to meet a parson who either hunts or shoots nowadays, that his little aberrations from sporting etiquette are willingly condoned.

There is yet one other shortcoming—the worst of all—of the bad shot, though again I must confess that he shares it in common with many good ones, and that is when, in addition to being dishonest, he is dangerous as well; and why such men, whether good or bad shots, are ever invited to shoot on another person's property must always remain a marvel. No doubt many hosts are apt to overlook this fault in a man who is otherwise a really fine performer with the gun; but it is incredible that anyone, no matter what his social position, nor how phenomenal his skill, should ever be allowed to imperil the lives or the eyesight of others. It is probably more *galling* to be peppered by a bad shot than a good one, but I can assure my readers that the process is equally *painful* in both instances. Still the fact remains, that men who are known to be dangerous shots continue to be asked to shooting parties; and that this should be the case is, in my humble opinion, a blot on both the common sense and the civilisation of the nineteenth century.

One such I can call to mind who, while by no means chary of the persons of his brother guns, seemed to rate a beater no higher than a rabbit; and it is a fact that many a stout ——shire labourer would refuse to come out beating, and thereby forego a

day of combined business and pleasure, on hearing that this gentleman was to be of the party. He was a retired military officer, and, had golf been as widely known in those days as the present, we should infallibly have christened him Colonel Bogey.

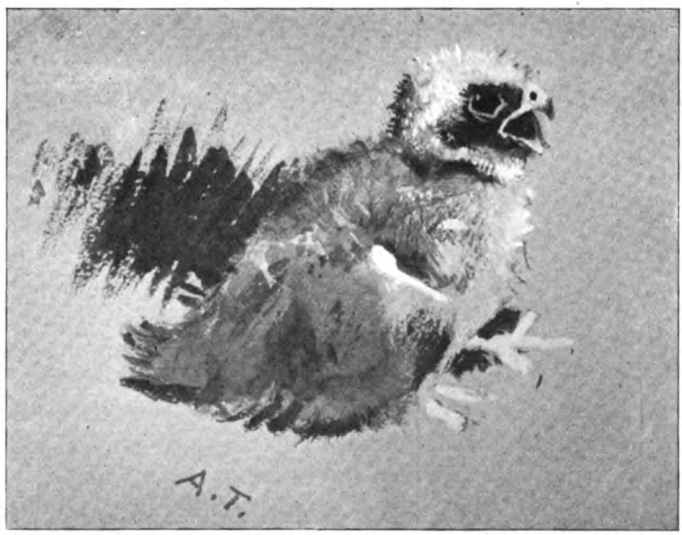
There is a story, for the veracity of which I cannot vouch, and which, indeed, one must sincerely trust is untrue, of a nervous sportsman who, at a strange country house, being asked to shoot, was struck by the persistently bad marksmanship of his neighbour in the line of guns. At length he could not refrain from privately asking whether the gentleman in question *ever* hit anything, only to receive the horrifying answer that 'He never shoots anything except men and dogs!'

There yet remains one other kind of sportsman who, paradoxical as it may seem, is at once a very good and a very bad shot. Most shooting men are familiar with this type, who is, as a rule, a most excellent fellow, his only fault being perhaps an excusable excess of keenness, but who, not having been born in the purple, has not had the opportunity of practising the more pretentious forms of shooting in vogue at the present day. No November partridge rising thirty yards away across the dripping turnips, no twisting snipe or skulking hedgerow pheasant, has much chance when this shooter's cheek is laid against the well-worn stock of his only fowling-piece—which probably began life as a pin-fire—provided only they fly straight away from him. But it is on the rare occasions that he is called on to kill the same birds driven at, or over, him that he fails, and fails lamentably to do so. He enjoys but few such opportunities in the course of a season, or possibly a lifetime, and dreams of them for days beforehand; and how bitter must be his mortification, whose reputation for skill extends over half a dozen parishes, when he finds himself missing shot after shot which others of the party, who under other circumstances are no whit better shots than himself, and probably not half such good *sportsmen*, kill with apparent ease! Of course with practice he would become just as skilful as they; but this, alas! is just what is denied him, and so he must be written down a bad shot, judged by modern standards.

I well remember meeting such an one at a large partridge drive some years ago. The birds were sent over the guns out of a great turnip field, into which the whole country-side had apparently been driven, and covey after covey, offering the most delightful of shots, came shrieking over the gentleman in question, who, however, failed to account for a single bird. Even now

I can recall his piteous expression, as he plaintively remarked, 'By George, what fun we could have had in that turnip field if *we had only walked it in line!*' And I have no doubt that under such circumstances he would not have missed a single thing he fired at.

In conclusion, let me in justice to myself frankly admit that, despite the pointed allusions I have made to the mote in my neighbour's eye, I am no less conscious of the beam in my own, and that I myself, though up till now I have happily escaped the imputation of being dangerous, can, alas! lay claim to no better title than that of a 'bad shot.'



AN OLD POSTING ROAD

BY JOHN BLUETT

THE interest which the revival of coaching began in our old high-roads some five-and-twenty years ago has of late become largely developed by the enterprise of the cyclist. Now that it is found possible to cover miles of the most beautiful country within an almost incredible time, with agreeable companionship, and without great expense, it has occurred to the lovers of the wheel to explore those old roads and country towns which had hitherto existed to them as only in the land of fable. These explorers can testify to the delights of road travelling, and to the truth of the descriptions they had heard; and it cannot be but that in the minds of many of them there exists a desire to think of these places as full of all their old life and bustle, to picture them again as once they were. The resuscitation of road coaching seems to some extent to revive experiences of a former day; but of travelling in a private carriage or in an inn postchaise the present generation can know but little. Where one sees a dozen pictures of coaching in all its varied phases, there is scarcely to be found one representation of posting, and yet travelling post was as much a fashion of the day as going by coach. True, it was more expensive, but it had necessarily many supporters, and the private carriages or postchaises, with a pair or four horses, must have been no small addition to the picturesqueness of the road.

To write upon the real old coaching days is not now my intention. I do not propose to go back to the glories of the road of 1830, but merely to give my own recollections of a later period, when as a boy I have often accompanied my father to London

and elsewhere, travelling by road, as he loved, instead of by train. Living upon one of the Great Western roads, on which thirty coaches a day had once passed, might seem an incentive to anyone to think of travelling, just as living by the sea is said to give the desire for exploration of foreign lands; and I cannot set foot on that road now without thinking of the many places through which it stretches its long trail, and wishing I could again change horses at every stage and travel over it once more. At the time of which I write it was still easy to get post-horses at the different country towns, often, indeed, at more than one inn at each; post-boys were then living who remembered the road in its palmy days, and lads were still taught how to ride and drive for the work. The only difference was that it was necessary to order the horses beforehand, otherwise there would be a slight delay in the change, as they were no longer kept ready harnessed, as in the old travelling days. My father's most frequent journeys were to London; driving to Bath with his own horses, he took his carriage through. This would be either a barouche or a clarence; both were fitted with oak boxes which went under the seats, and also with an imperial trunk, strapped on, as the case might be, either above or beneath.

Starting from the famous old 'White Hart' at Bath, where now stands the Grand Pump Room Hotel, we reached Chippenham in about an hour and a half. It was my delight as a boy some ten years old to sit on the box with my father, and well do I remember the pleasure of starting up the stony Bath Street, with the four grey or black horses (they were always of one of these colours there), and the two post-boys in scarlet jackets, white leather breeches and black hats; these took us to the top of the Box Hill, where the leaders were taken off, and we went on to the 'Angel' at Chippenham. Turning the corner at the bottom of the hilly street, we saw the fresh horses standing at the top ready for us at the door, and the post-boy on his horse, as in the olden time. A few minutes were enough for the change; the new horses were well-bred and workmanlike, but the turn-out lacked the finish of the Bath one; the post-boy, however, in his blue jacket and flat mother-of-pearl buttons, real white beaver hat, and spotless cords, knew his work thoroughly well, and took us easily to Calne. This was only a six miles' stage, though the road was slightly hilly. Calne was one of the few towns in England where the curfew then rang, but I am told that the ancient custom is discontinued there. The Lansdowne Arms stands down in the market-place of this quaint little town;

and as we pulled up there came out of the gateway a pair of sturdy roans, well looking and well groomed, carrying good solid brass harness brightly polished. Now the colours are changed again to a red jacket with still the white beaver hat. These colours even then denoted the politics of the house, the blue being Tory, the red or yellow Liberal. On we went again up the hill, out of the market-place, past the old 'White Hart,' and along the dead, heavy road that leads over the down to Marlborough, leaving on the left the quaint brown Silbury Hill, and pulling up to water at the 'Waggon and Horses,' near where the other road runs in from Devizes. And now we get into Marlborough, as the old street is lighted up in the evening dusk, and rattle up on the cobble-stone front to the door of the 'Ailesbury Arms.'

Here we stayed for the night, and a most comfortable house it was; nor have I forgotten the buck-pie and the exquisite Wiltshire bacon, the latter the product of Mrs. Carter's own farm. I well recollect old Mrs. Carter and her son—she was an ideal old English landlady—so can I too remember (to retrace our steps but for a moment) Mr. and Miss Sabin at the 'White Hart' at Bath, the Lawes at Chippenham, and the two brothers Pinniger and their sister at Calne.

Having looked out the next morning at the market-place, where the country folk are already beginning to display their wares, we are ready by nine o'clock to resume our journey. Out of the long steep gateway come the four handsome browns, thoroughly well turned out by old George Holt, the ostler; the post-boys in yellow jackets, black hats, brown cord breeches, and faultless tops. They start at a slow and steady trot, and take us to the top of the famous Marlborough Hill, to the borders of Savernake Forest. Here, as the day before, to my great regret, the leaders are dismissed, and we go on through the forest to Hungerford. This is a lovely drive, even if you keep only to the highroad; the forest glades and the open fields as you get out on the Downs again are things not easily forgotten. I have been by favour through the heart of the forest, getting on to the highroad later on; the grand avenue is magnificent, and the wildness is that of the days of Arden. It is a somewhat long stage to Hungerford, and though the 'Bear,' with its large painted sign, was undoubtedly the head house, and could have supplied horses, my father used to go to the 'White Hart,' a little inn opposite, where the stables were kept by one Chesterman, whom he had formerly known as a stage coachman. I think the horses here were usually grey; I know they were very good and the post-boys very smart, with round gilt buttons on their yellow

jackets, white cords, and white silk hats. They took us on to the 'Pelican' at Newbury, one of the famous posting-houses of the old road. It was really at Speenhamland, a little out of Newbury, whose well-known inn is the 'Jack.' It was of the 'Pelican' at Newbury that the old rhyme ran—

The famous inn at Speenhamland
That stands beneath the hill,
May well be called the 'Pelican,'
From its enormous bill.

I do not fancy the bill was enormous in our day. I remember the house standing back in the yard, which had a sort of green railing before it. It has now been shut up for many years, but I believe the posting yard is still open. Here there must have been, even at the time of which I write, a good deal of posting work; I suppose there was then no railway very near it. The horses were nearly all rusty brown and very good; there were three or four post-boys kept there, some of them old men; their dress was very plain and workmanlike—black hats, yellow jackets, darker or lighter as they had been washed, and brown cloth breeches; they knew their work and 'what belonged to it:' they used to ride the long flat stage seventeen posting miles to Reading at a steady slow trot all the way, pulling up to water at the half-way house. I think we had once or twice four horses from Newbury; it was really too long a pull for only a pair to Reading. The road lay through Thatcham, with its leaning maypole, the only one I have ever seen, through Theale, with its swinging sign of the 'Falcon,' and so on to Reading, where the railway had already begun to play havoc with the old posting houses. The first to go was the head house, the 'Bear;' it was on the very verge of shutting up on my first journey. I think the old colours there were dark blue, but I recollect a very smart post-boy from there in a scarlet jacket and leathers driving us to Salt Hill in pouring rain.

After the 'Bear' at Reading closed, we used to change at the 'George,' and then had recourse to the Railway Hotel just built. The stage from Reading to Salt Hill is of similar length to the last, and of the same flinty gravel road with yellow dust. We passed through Maidenhead, generally stopping to water at Boyne Hill, close to it, and so on to the famous Windmill at Salthill, kept, as old Eton boys will remember, by Mr. Botham. He was as famous a landlord as the road could boast, but his proximity to Eton, and the boys' consequent visits, must have cost him many anxious moments. Between his high sense of duty and his desire to save their skins and their character,

he could have had no easy time of it. Sometimes we slept at Salt Hill, and this would give us a very short journey to London next day. Opposite the inn is a very pretty garden belonging to it, close to the famous mound which gives its name to the Eton 'Montem.'

From Salt Hill the turn-out was, I think, rather plainer than usual, though the horses were sound and good. If I remember right, there was a brass windmill on the harness, the jacket was blue, and I fancy the hat was white beaver. This, and those at Chippenham and Calne, would be the only beavers on the road. Such hats are now only seen on smart coaching men of the present day. Leaving Windsor to the right, the Salt Hill horses took us through Slough and Colnbrook to Hounslow; the large elm tree and the swinging blue and gold bell in front of the old inn are before my mind's eye now. There was a touch of the mediæval hostelry about them. Here, as we pulled in on the green in front of the door, the London horses were waiting for us; these were from 'Newman's,' and of course there was a smartness and finish on them we had not met before; grey horses with perfect harness and the post-boy in an Eton-blue jacket with mother-of-pearl buttons, a white waistcoat, snowy cords and faultless boots, and a white silk hat. There were good horses to be had at the 'Bell,' but we had them always as we came homewards. Through Brentford and Hammersmith, with their dirty narrow streets, we came, and so into London, the post-boy threading his way through the mazy crowd of vehicles in a way which it was a delight to watch. Then, as we alighted in Cavendish Square, there would come to me a pang of regret that I must wait a fortnight at least in smoky London before we could get on the delightful road again. It was exhilarating, it was delightful to travel by road, to set out through the beautiful country, and drawing near to the old towns with the tired horses, to feel that fresh ones were waiting to take us on; to start again, leaving the town behind, and to live, as it were, in novelty every hour of the day; to wonder if the road were new, what the next town would be like, its inns, its horses, its colours; and if it were familiar, then to look out for the turn of the narrow street, the lamp hanging out over the inn door, the horses standing ready, the well-known faces, aye, and to receive the welcome of which we felt so certain. It was an innocent enjoyment, the perfection of which is known, I think, to none but true lovers of the road, whose prototypes were perchance not altogether absent from the graceful Roman poet's mind, when he began his immortal sentence 'Sunt quos curriculo pulverem.'

THE HONOURABLE JOHN

BY ARTHUR SCAIFE

It was after Milo had been with me five years. That is about the time it takes to test the wearing capacity of most men and things, including members of one's bodyguard, but exclusive of matrimony, which is full of surprises at all times.

The Honourable John—he had a surname, it doesn't in the least matter what—suggested that we should go quail shooting.

An excellent sort was the Honourable John. We had been at school together, and were now renewing our friendship 'twixt Marmora and Euxine, a locality which, as he said, he was 'taking in' on his voyage round the world.

We had always called him the Honourable John at school, on the remotest off chance—about one in fourteen—of his father succeeding to an earldom. Everyone between him and the title had obligingly died, as they so frequently do in fiction, so rarely in fact, and in due course the Honourable John had come by his own. He had 'looked me up,' as he always said he would, and we foregathered in the most approved style as a natural consequence.

The Honourable John, as I have said, wanted to go quail shooting, and at once. That was just like him and other young Englishmen. They can't for the life of them keep still for a couple of hours, and the Honourable John was rather more of the quicksilver order than the rest of them.

Unfortunately for my peace of mind and body, he read in the paper at breakfast that some one had broken a record in quails, and had shot over a thousand in a single day.

That was quite enough for him; he wanted to be off instantly, then and there, as if there were not another quail left in the world.

'So be it; we'll go to-night,' I said, willing to humour him; 'and as I must be back by Sunday, that will give us four clear days' shooting. I guarantee you shall get all the quails you want in that time, provided, of course, you can hit them.'

The Honourable John had no misgivings on this score, and, as events proved, he was an admirable shot.

I clapped my hands for Milo, and gave him certain instructions. He salaamed and withdrew.

'What have you told him?' asked the Honourable John.

'I have told him,' I answered, 'that you and I are going quail shooting for four days. That we start by the six o'clock train to-night, and return on Sunday evening, and that he is to do the needful.'

'Is that all?' queried the Honourable John doubtfully.

'That is all—no, I forgot. I told him that everything, including the trip, was not to cost us more than 10*l.*; that's a fiver apiece. You can stand that, can't you?'

'Oh! dash the money!—that's all right,' said the Honourable John; 'but look here, my dear fellow, what had we better take with us? I've never shot in this country before. Just tell me what I ought to get, will you?' and out came his notebook.

'I haven't the faintest idea what we are going to take,' I answered blandly; 'I don't even know where we are going; I've left all that to Milo—he attends to the details.'

'Well, I suppose you know your own business,' said the Honourable John, somewhat incredulously—he evidently had very little confidence in my henchman's administrative powers—'but I always look after these things myself. I never leave them to my servant, then I know that nothing will be forgotten.'

'That's just what I don't know,' I answered, 'unless I leave everything to mine. Milo is my memory on these occasions, and a very good one he makes, let me assure you.'

'Do you mean to tell me that you leave everything to him—guns, cartridges, dogs, tents, grub, everything?'

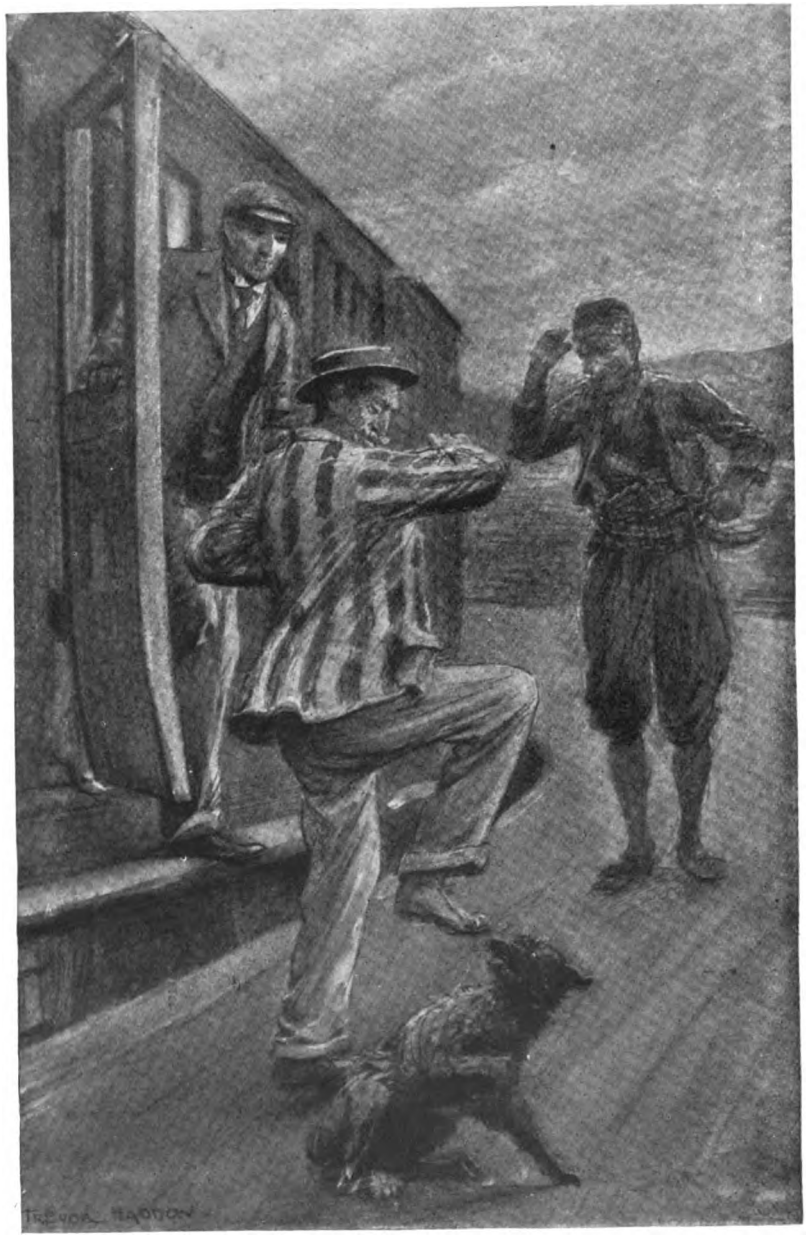
'Everything.'

'Well! I'll bet you my share of the ex's that he leaves something behind!'

'My dear fellow, I should be betting on a certainty. Milo is no chicken. He's been out with me before many a time, and knows far better than I do what I want.'

'Anyhow, it's a bet. Just for the joke of the thing.'

'Very well, old chap. If you're bent on losing your money, far be it from me to prevent you.'



HE TROD ON A SLEEPING DOG

The foregoing conversation took place in the garden, where we lolled in our hammocks under the chestnut trees, and enjoyed an after-breakfast cigarette. The Honourable John was in tennis attire, for he had a match on at half-past ten. All his day was mapped out in athletic periods. Suddenly he looked at his watch and flew off to keep an appointment—but it doesn't in the least matter with whom. He said he would be back to lunch in plenty of time to pack up his traps himself.

But I—I had my doubts.

We were to start at five o'clock to catch the train, which left at six, and at about a quarter to five he turned up red in the face —breathless—to find me reading in my accustomed lounge under the chestnut trees, cool and comfortable. He was very much the reverse, having run the best part of a mile in a broiling September sun. There was a flower in his button-hole, which was not there when he left.

'A bit late for lunch, I'm afraid, old man,' I said. 'Did—ahem!—did the match come off?'

'Oh! I say, old chap, I'm awfully sorry, but——' and here followed the usual string of excuses which fellows always make under similar circumstances.

I said it didn't in the least matter, and that I hoped he'd had a good time; but he didn't hear this Parthian shot, for he'd flown off into the house. In less than two minutes he flew out again with a look of the blankest astonishment on his face.

'I say, here's a pretty go; where the deuce are all my traps? I can't find anything. Do you know what has happened to them?'

I said I hadn't the faintest idea, and turned lazily in my hammock to look at him.

The Honourable John was very irate indeed; especially incensed was he at what he was pleased to call my infernal coolness.

I suggested, when he had, *à la* Falstaff, tired himself in base comparisons that he'd better ask Milo. A brilliant idea.

He flew off into the house again, only to reappear instantly, madder than ever, with the assurance that he'd be hanged if he could find Milo.

I suggested that, perhaps, Milo had gone off with his traps, and got up from my hammock; for I saw that our *caique* which was to take us to the station was lying alongside the stone steps leading from the garden down to the Bosphorus.

Then light gradually began to dawn upon the soul of the Honourable John.

'It's time to start,' I said, laughing. 'Are you ready?'

'What! are you going just as you are?' he asked in amazement.

'Just as I am.'

'And our traps and Milo—where are they?'

'I haven't the faintest idea. For goodness sake don't worry. It's too hot. You'll either win your bet or lose it; but, anyway, it's too early in the day to decide which,' and I took my seat in the boat, which contained our light overcoats. 'However, go back if you like; Milo may have forgotten something, and you can bring it along with you.'

But the Honourable John, muttering something to the effect that Milo and his master between them made up the darndest pair he'd ever come across, sat down beside me, nearly upsetting the *caique* as he did so, and in ten seconds we were flying down with the current at the rate of ten miles an hour.

We arrived at the station ten minutes before the train left, the Honourable John still in an irascible and uncertain frame of mind. He didn't appreciate this sudden plunge into the unknown.

Your Englishman likes to have everything cut and dried months beforehand, and rather enjoys booking his seat at the theatre six weeks in advance.

He brightened up a little at the prospect of getting the tickets; it was something to do.

'Where shall I book for?' he asked, bustling up to the ticket office.

I said I hadn't the faintest idea, which made him mad again, and he wanted to know when I was going to stop playing the fool.

Just then one of the officials of the railway came up and addressed me in Turkish.

'Are you Milo's *chelibi* (master)?' he asked, politely, and on my assuring him that I was, he presented me with a couple of tickets.

'Here you are, old man,' I said, tendering one to the Honourable John.

You should have seen his face.

We took our seats in a first-class carriage, and during the two hours of our journey he gazed stolidly out of the window and uttered never a word.

MILO HANDED HIM AN ICED WHISKY-AND-SODA

It was dark when we arrived at our destination—a small fishing village on the European shore of Marmora. If I told you its name you would not be able to pronounce it.

'Is this the beastly place?' asked the Honourable John, grumpily, and he trod on a sleeping dog—always a foolish thing to do, which did not improve his temper—or the dog's.

An amiable cut-throat, all knives and pistols, loomed up out of the darkness and salaamed.

'Is the *Effendi* Milo's *chelibi*?'

The *chelibi* admitted the soft impeachment and followed the amiable cut-throat with blind confidence.

The Honourable John, in a state of the profoundest bewilderment, brought up the rear. I am certain that he thought I was mad. On the seashore, some fifty yards from the station, a large fishing *caique* was drawn up waiting for us. With the assistance of the *caiquegees*, three in number, we scrambled in over the stern. Then the boat shoved off into the darkness. There were extra wraps in the boat, for the air was chilly when the sun went down, and we were glad to put them on.

After about a quarter of an hour's rowing, the wind being contrary, the Honourable John, pacifically inclined, said:

'But seriously, old man, do you mean to tell me that you don't know where we are going?'

'Seriously, I don't, but I fancy these men do. Milo has arranged it all. I know nothing whatever about it.'

I'm afraid, though I'm loth to admit it, that the Honourable John did not believe me.

In rather less than an hour we caught sight of a light moving on the shore in the pitch blackness of the night, there being no moon, and of twilight in those regions there is none.

Our boatmen rowed towards the light, and shortly afterwards we grounded close to another cut-throat—same equipment—who was standing on the shore with a lantern.

He asked no questions, but helped us out of the boat and took our wraps from us. Then he led the way through the brush.

Five minutes brought us in sight of the ruddy glow of a camp fire, and we heard the barking of dogs. The Honourable John fairly gasped for breath as he gazed upon as cosy and picturesque a camp as he had ever pictured in his wildest dreams.

A glorious fire blazed in front of a couple of tents pitched in a ravine at the side of a wooded stream with background of moss and evergreen.

Our beds were neatly turned down on camp bedsteads, one in

each tent, which also contained a small camp table. On the Honourable John's was his dressing-case ready opened, with all the silver-mounted brushes and paraphernalia he loved so well laid out to hand precisely as he was in the habit of using them; our guns and cartridge-belts were hanging in different corners; our shooting clothes neatly folded at the foot of each bed, while the toes of our shooting boots peeped discreetly from underneath. The dogs were tethered on a litter of dried fern some twenty yards away, and on a spit over the fire, and by this time done to a turn, there roasted a string of quail, alternately with *kibobs*, small dice-shaped pieces of mutton, which must be tasted to be appreciated.

The Honourable John scanned everything with a look on his face which I am powerless to describe. He was away up in the clouds, and evidently thought he was dreaming, till a strangely familiar pop brought him back to reality, and Milo handed him an iced whisky-and-soda in a long glass on a tray.

'Well, I'm damned,' said the Honourable John when he had finished his drink at a single draught. That was all he said, but it meant a great deal.

'The *chelibi* is served,' said Milo, with the air of an introducer of ambassadors, and we took our seats on moss-covered logs at the table spread within comfortable distance of the fire and lighted by half a dozen Chinese lanterns.

'But what I don't understand is,' said the Honourable John over a cigarette between the courses, of which we had four, 'what I don't understand is——' but he gave up the problem and attacked a roast quail instead as being easier of solution.

If we didn't get a thousand quail apiece per diem during our four days, we had 'good hunting,' and though the Honourable John lost his bet, he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Verily Milo had good gifts. Some of them, I fancy, were in coin of the realm from the Honourable John.

WOMEN'S GOLF

BY LOUIE MACKERN

IT is hard to believe, in these days of fierce competition, of struggle and scramble, of storm and stress, that once upon a time the world was a comparatively peaceful place to live in. Of course, even then, the terrors of monotony were averted by sundry violences on the part of citizens of the baser and more bloodthirsty sort, and the material comfort of the many was often rudely tampered with by the idiosyncrasies of the rowdy few. But, taken as a whole, life was undoubtedly an easier thing then than it is now, when the very babies are offered the prize of a box at the theatre as a reward for the best couplet on the subject of the pantomime to be represented. Poor babies! Poorer couplets probably! And so, because we, as a race, are nothing if not strenuous, we must begin our competitions in the 'Golden Age,' pursue them doggedly through our prime, till we are shouldered out of the track, later on, by the younger and stronger competitors. These are days of international championships, inter-county competitions, inter-club matches, and it is on the subject of inter-club golf matches that I wish to say the proverbial 'few words.'

The subject may not at first sight seem a very promising one, its limitations being obviously rather narrow, and the keen personal interest in its details being confined to a necessarily small number of golfers. And yet there are one or two very interesting, and I think important, points which certainly call for a fair hearing, if for no lengthened discussion. But before entering on a statement of those points, it would be well to review, in brief, the alteration that has taken place during the

last few years in all the large clubs with respect to inter-club matches. And surely the increasing number of these matches played every year is one of the healthiest signs of development in ladies' golf.

A few years ago these matches were somewhat rare events, the captain's temper and patience being severely taxed in getting the team together. Many and tortuous were the excuses urged: one member would not play if it involved a journey by train; another's husband would not allow her to play if it rained; a third would only consent to play if placed at the tail of the team, so as to avoid, if possible, the chance of a beating. Then the captain had to appear not to mind when two or three of her team threw her over at the last moment, as a more attractive engagement had cropped up. Indeed, looked at from all points, it was an anxious and wearing business to carry through an inter-club match successfully. But now, how different it is; how much more sporting and keen women-golfers have become, and how glad all the better players are for a chance to play for their club and to try their strength on a fresh links! And there is no doubt that to induce steadiness, pluck, and resource, there is no training so good as this playing of inter-club matches. Say you are playing for your club, and are leading by two or three holes at the fifteenth, how it braces you to feel that by keeping your head, and playing a steady patient game, you will probably end four or five up for your club! And if, on the other hand, you are down to your opponent, you can set your teeth hard, and, remembering that no match is lost till it is won, do your level best to halve the remaining holes and so avert a crushing defeat. It is a distinct gift to be able to play a losing game well, but the inner meanings and mysteries of this gift lie deep in temperament and are too subtle for discussion in a mere magazine article.

The captain's work of placing the various members of her team is an excessively delicate and difficult task. So many things have to be considered, besides the ordinary hard-and-fast distinctions as indicated by the handicaps. Many golfers who, by dint of plodding industry, have succeeded in returning low scores, and have had their handicaps lowered, may not be nearly as good match-players as those with a higher handicap, but who play a more brilliant and pluckier game. Then, again, long drivers are at a far greater advantage on long links than on the short and tricky courses which demand very accurate play. Some players (generally the nervous, irritable temperaments) who are steady and useful on their home links, are almost useless on a strange course

if anything ruffles them at the start, or if the luck is against them.

Therefore, to place the members of a team to the best advantage requires keen judgment, insight, and unlimited tact on the part of the captain. One thing I would suggest for the help and comfort of any captain in any club in times of perplexity is that a record be kept of the performances of each member of the team in all inter-club matches. I have seen such a record, accurately and beautifully kept, and it is most instructive and interesting.

Here I would like to introduce one of the points to which I referred above, viz. the system of scoring in inter-club matches. The ordinary way, of course, is simply to decide the result by the greater number of holes won. Now, I contend that this does not necessarily decide the relative strength of the two *teams*, though it obviously decides, for the time being, the relative strength of each couple of opposing players. To make my meaning quite clear I will cite an instance in point which actually happened. The B-club team played the L-club team, and the results were as follows:

B-Club		L-Club	
No. 1	11 up	No. 1	0
No. 2	0	No. 2	4 up
No. 3	0	No. 3	3 up
No. 4	0	No. 4	1 up
No. 5	2 up	No. 5	0
No. 6	0	No. 6	2 up
No. 7	0	No. 7	2 up
Total	13	Total	12

Thus the B-club won the match by 1 hole, though the L-club won 5 out of the 7 *matches* played. Now, the L-club were obviously a better *team*, but owing to the breakdown of their first player, they lost the match. To prevent such cases, and also to preserve a fair balance in the value of matches and holes won, a plan has been devised by a very keen and clever golfer. His idea is, briefly, this: for every match won, add two points to the total of holes won. Thus in the match I have mentioned, the L-team would have scored 10 points extra (2 each for the 5 matches won), thus bringing their total to 22. The B-team would have added 4 points (2 each for the 2 matches won), bringing their total to 17, and thus the L-club would have won the match by 5 points, instead of having lost it by 1 hole. The Ladies' Golf Union

decided to give this system of scoring a fair trial, and it has been found to work well. Of course, in many cases it makes no material difference, but, until a better system is devised, there is much to be said in favour of this one.

Many golfers think a fairer plan would be to score only the matches won, and not count the holes at all. But this method, too, has its drawbacks, as it would lead to so many inter-club matches being drawn, and hardly enough importance would be given to the individual play of the different members of the team. Altogether this question of scoring in inter-club matches is a very knotty point, though most golfers dismiss it with the indifferent remark, 'Oh! it is fairly well as it is; why not leave it alone?' But this lazy policy does not seem to me to be the right way to face and grapple with a difficulty. However, let me bring forward another point that deserves attention.

In most ladies' golf clubs it is only the very best players, or at most a selection from the twelve or fourteen best players, who are called upon to play in inter-club matches. This certainly seems to me a matter for regret in many ways. There is a large class of players in most clubs, inferior to the rest and yet able to play a fairly good game, very keen and thirsting for a chance to gain experience and to meet players of other clubs. With practice, many of these golfers would become quite good match-players, and, in time, might often fill most usefully a place at the tail of the club team. Now, why should not this second class form an 'A Team' (as in football clubs), and meet other 'A Teams' of opposing clubs? This would, of course, entail more work for the captain and secretary, but it would be work that would reap an ample reward. To ensure a certain equality in these opposing 'A Teams,' the plan might be adopted of taking the Golf Union handicap of the various players, and arranging the team so that a 7 handicap was opposed to a 7, a 9 handicap to a 9, and so on. One of the objections to be urged against this plan will be that all clubs do not belong to the Ladies' Golf Union, but the exceptions are, fortunately, very few. The Golf Union handicaps are not yet perfect, any more than other earthly things; but no one who has thoroughly and dispassionately studied the system by which they are worked, can deny that it is, at least, moving in the right direction.

This plan of putting players with equal handicaps to play against each other, makes the choice of players far less constricted, for naturally there are often several 9s or 12s, &c., in the various clubs. It would be a mistake, I think, to include

players with a handicap of over 12 in these 'A teams.' For, frankly, I do not believe it is possible to correctly classify and arrange the handicaps of players beyond that limit. The element of flukeing is too substantial a factor in that sort of play, for it to be possible to gauge accurately the exact difference between the form of, say, an 18 and a 20 handicap player. But at all events, in the interests of a very large proportion of women golfers, some effort might be made in the various big golf clubs to institute good 'second' match teams, who should have the chance of playing, say, six inter-club matches during the year.

Women golfers may, without conceit, congratulate themselves on the strides they have taken in the last few years, and may take heart of grace for the New Year we have entered. And with the prospect in 1899 of fresh interest in the way of inter-county matches, and the essentially dramatic enterprise of an international competition between the women golfers of England and America, let us end with this greeting to all women who love golf:

'Go on, and prosper!'

OUR SAILORS AT PLAY

BY LIEUTENANT STUART D. GORDON, R.N.

RIDING

It is true that 'riding out a gale' or 'riding at anchor' would appear more characteristic of the sailor than the riding referred to here, which relates more particularly to the seaman enjoying himself on shore astride of a steed; nevertheless, as is well known, there are among the officers of the Royal Navy many who are not ignorant of matters equestrian, and are themselves no mean horsemen.

This was never more amply shown than by the circumstance that, during the prolonged stay of the fleet at Besika Bay—in 1878–79—it was entirely at the suggestion and through the energy of naval men themselves that a complete pack of well-bred beagles was got together and maintained, not a few of the officers also owning private mounts, whilst the kennel, groom, and stable staffs consisted solely of bluejackets and marines.

This establishment was surnamed the 'D.I.O. Hunt,' the cognomen signifying 'Damme, I'm off!' presaging the exclamation that would fall from the lips of many a member as he found himself ignominiously thrown from his exalted, and maybe unwonted, position. For that there were falls, as among more experienced riders, goes without saying; but that a sailor can hang on to anything by 'the skin of his teeth' is proverbial, so it may be accepted as the fact that when falls occurred, either horse and rider came to the ground together, or the animal put in a considerable amount of hard work ere his efforts to get rid of his rider were crowned with success.

Referring for a moment to the sport actually had with the 'D.I.O.,' although not rigidly regulated upon the lines we see followed at home, it was certainly provocative of an enormous amount of enjoyment and fun, and as this was the main reason of the 'D.I.O.'s' being, and as a good hungry jackal will run any three packs to a standstill, everyone was satisfied. The legitimate quarry was, of course, the hare; but, as these unfortunate little animals had also the 'shootist' to reckon with, the scent of the jackal, as suggested, was frequently followed in the absence of 'puss.'

Then, later in the afternoon, when the men landed, the bluejacket might be seen picking out, seemingly with the critical eye of a trainer, the least ricketty of the gaunt specimens of horseflesh that could be had on hire. It was truly marvellous how these apparently half-starved brutes would get over the ground —though, perhaps, the cruel coal-scuttle stirrup, with its knife-like edge, had something to do with it.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that the characteristic *bonhomie* of the Service man, whether officer or bluejacket, is not, when he comes ashore, like the Dutchman's anchor, left at home, and it is to be doubted if the saying 'Dull care sits behind the horseman' remains true when the horseman happens to be the sailor. Even should he come to grief over a jump, or otherwise part company with his mount, the good-natured chaff of his comrades acts as a most effective salve to his bruises, if, indeed, he does not forget all about his shaking, laughing, as he is bound to, while watching the harum-scarum scamper the others are making in their vain efforts to capture his runaway steed—as likely as not some of them meeting with the same fate as himself.

It is both peculiar and remarkable of the sailor, that he will introduce into his riding—and this quite unconsciously—the 'discipline of the Service.' He thoroughly constitutes himself skipper of the ship, any jibbing or swerving on the part of his mount is resented as mutiny, and a flogging is meted out accordingly. Neglect to pull up or turn aside, when ordered to do so by the approved methods, is looked upon as 'refusing to obey the lawful command of his superior officer.' And yet, when the skipper himself is at last thrown overboard, the dominating thought in the mind of the bluejacket (late skipper) is one of solicitude for the mutinous: how on earth will the vessel manage to sail without a captain!

This idea was amusingly set forth in 'Punch' some years ago, illustrated in his well-known clever style by the late Charles

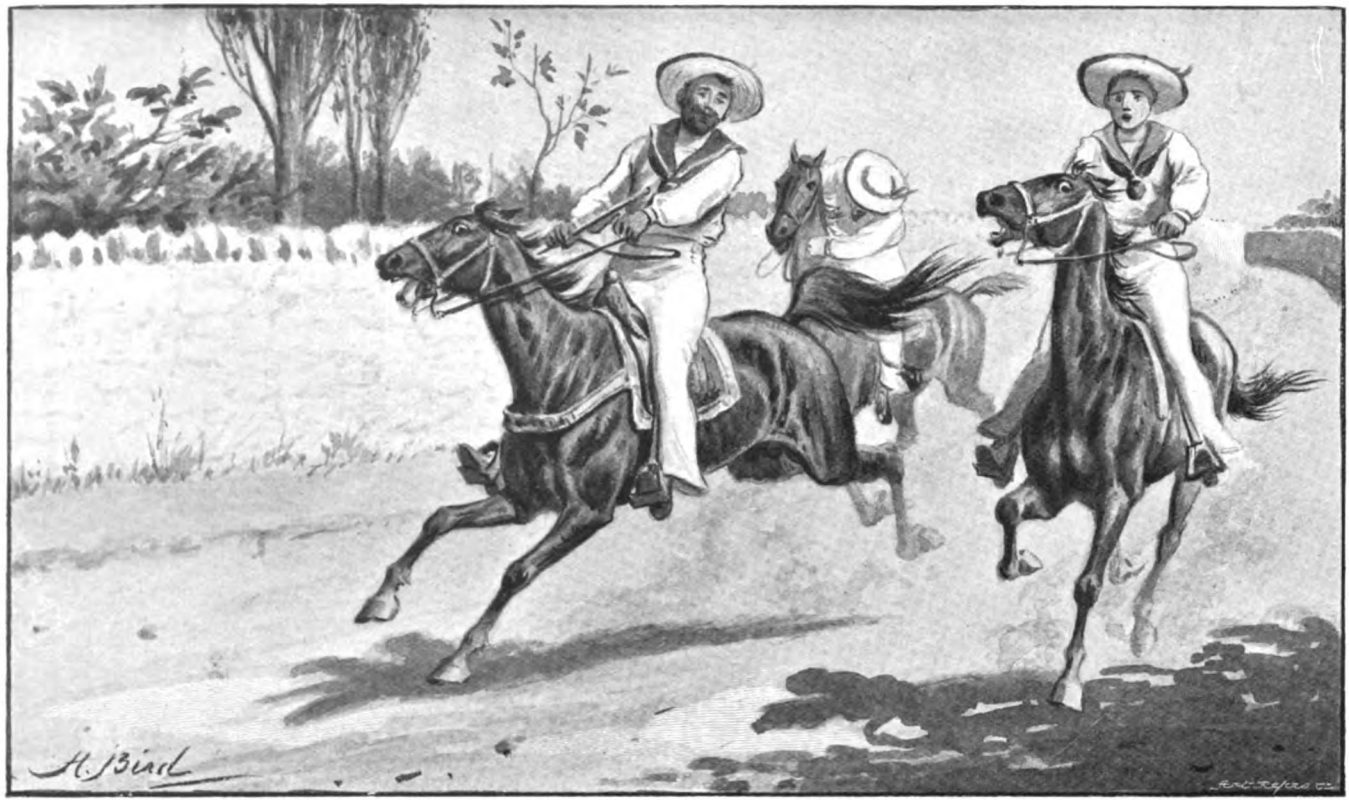
Keene. This illustration represented on one side of a small ditch, the horse, having refused the jump, while upon the other side, seated upon the ground, was a bluejacket, minus his hat and scratching his head, as he thus addressed his now riderless mount: 'It's all very well for me, mate,' said he, 'but how the blankety blank *you're* a-going to get over beats me 'oller!'

Many among the younger, and some of the older, officers of a man-of-war make it their first business, upon arriving at a strange port, to ascertain the facilities offered for fulfilling their desire to bestride a horse. Howbeit, the horse is not always considered an essential—the mule, the donkey, the camel or the elephant, either alike serving the turn of the more 'horsey' element on board. Perhaps it is the greater exhilaration derived from the motion, compared to that obtainable from the monotonous wallowing of a modern war-vessel in the trough of the sea, that gives an additional zest to the experience of a ride to a naval man; but certain it is that this form of pastime, the very antithesis of all that occurs in the ordinary opportunities of a sailor, is grasped with avidity by most seamen—though he may not know the difference between the hock and the pastern of the animal that is carrying him.

But in the satisfying of his predilection for riding, the naval man undoubtedly, and almost invariably, gets swindled. Nor is this surprising; for, in the first place, all the world over, horse-dealers as a rule have the best of it; moreover, the sailor is necessarily strange to the place, and, in a less degree perhaps, to the tricks and turns of the land-shark. Is it to be wondered at, then, that he is often desperately defrauded—at times in the most barefaced manner?

As instancing this, there was at Malta some years ago a celebrated horse, by name 'Balaclava.' 'Celebrated,' be it understood, not by reason of its having taken part in the glorious charge of that name, but because of its—or rather, its master's—notoriously depraved behaviour, which same had earned for the animal so well-deserved and well-known a reputation, that it was only those new to the place—passing through on their way out or home—who were ever deceived into engaging Balaclava for an afternoon's ride.

It should be said that the actual hiring of the horse is generally done by the naval man himself going to the livery stable, where, after inspecting the stud, he then and there has his choice saddled and bridled—thus avoiding all chance of substitution, a common trick of the hack fraternity. Before starting upon his anticipated



IT WAS MARVELLOUS HOW THESE HALF-STARVED BRUTES WOULD GET OVER THE GROUND

pleasure, however, there is an important part of the transaction to be fulfilled—to wit, payment. This is always insisted upon in advance, and the amount varies with the locality, but at Malta is, on an average, fifteen shillings to a sovereign the day, according to style, the (alleged) breed of the animal, trappings, &c. &c.

Balaclava being an exceptionally handsome and stylish-looking beast, the major sum, if not more, was the price of his hire. But, as will be seen, it was not in this manner alone that he brought fame and fortune to his scoundrelly owner.

A young officer, say, would go through the above procedure, not forgetting—or rather, not being allowed to forget—the last item on the programme, and then, mounting this historically named charger, would straightway sally forth in expectation of a pleasant afternoon's ride to, for example, the racecourse or Citta Vecchia. In any case, he is bound to pass through the outskirts of Florian (the fashionable suburb of Valletta), and there his troubles would begin. Situated at the farther end of the parade-ground is a handsome large fountain. Immediately on arriving opposite this, Balaclava would begin to kick, and plunge, and buck, till none but the most experienced horseman could hope to retain his seat for long. It being allowed that steeplechase jockeys are the exception, not the rule, in the Service, it requires no prophet to foretell that very soon there might have been seen a young officer picking himself up from the powdered holystone which passes as road dust at Malta. But Balaclava—what of him?

This is a question many would in their day have liked to have been able to answer. If, as he naturally would, the late rider retraced his steps to the stable, and demanded the return of his money, he was met with a query regarding the 'most valuable 'orse in Malta, sare,' and as often as not found it better to pay up—though he knew it to be a downright robbery—another five pounds or so to avoid threatened legal proceedings.

It is hardly necessary to state that the Maltee 'master of the horse' had, by a systematic training, so perfected the animal in these tricks and pranks that the occasions when Balaclava was ever got past that fountain could be checked off on one's fingers, while his perfidious owner died a millionaire (for Malta, that is to say).

The last part of this horse's lesson was perhaps the cleverest of all. After throwing his rider, he would gallop off as hard as he could, and, when safely round the nearest corner, leisurely make his way home, but, to a *different* stable belonging to his master,

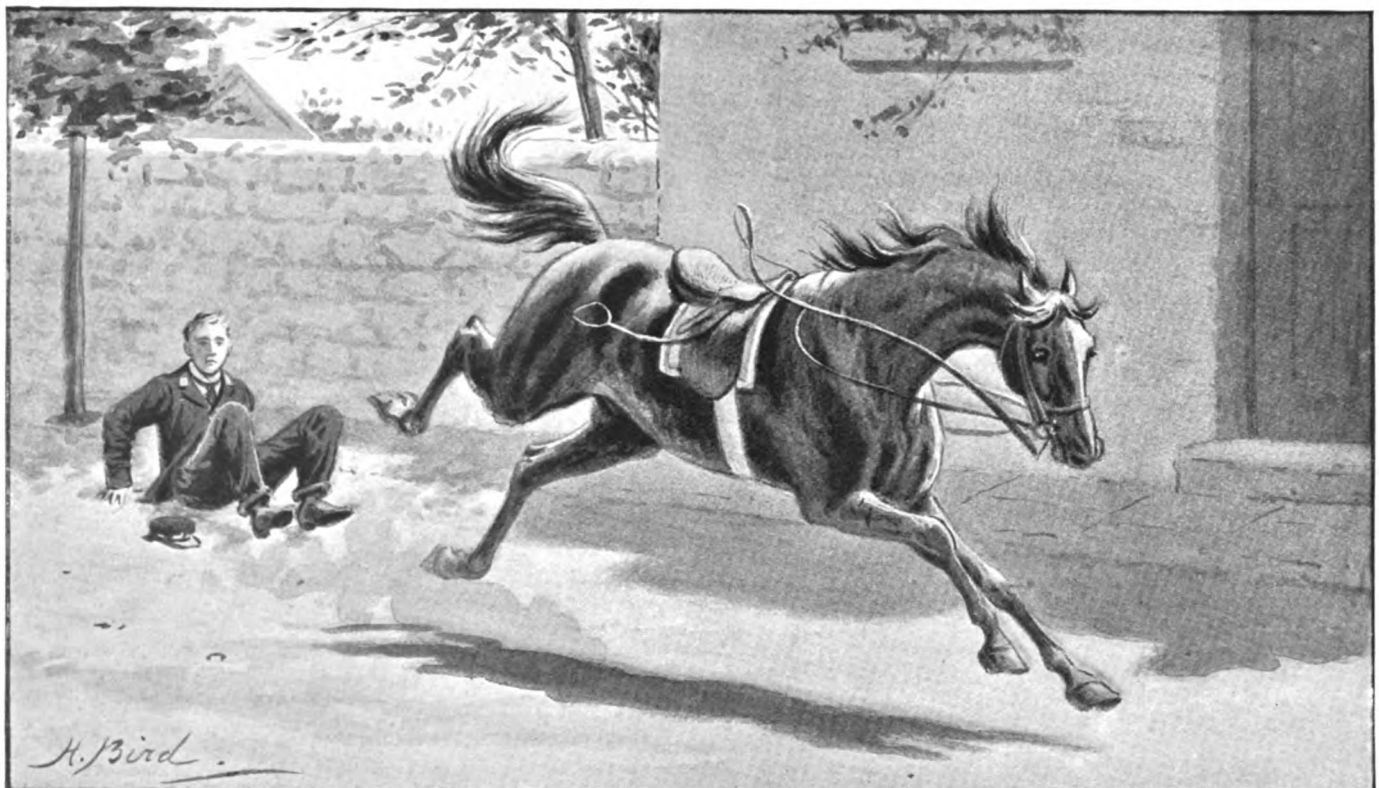
where he found a good feed of oats awaiting him as a reward for his (master's) villainy.

The legitimate charge the naval man is called upon to pay for the day's hire of a horse varies, as has been stated, according to the place he happens to be at; and although at Gibraltar, for example, it is usual to pay not less than five dollars (1*l.*) for a run with the Calpe Hunt, the writer has on occasion procured a very decent mount for a tenth of that sum (half a dollar) per diem. But this was in Northern China, where horseflesh and fodder are as cheap as money is scarce.

To come further south, in the same part of the world, at Foo-chow the ordinary price is one dollar a day, and this too with a European saddle—a luxury not dreamt of in the former instance. The animals to be obtained here—invariably called ponies, hardly ever reaching 14 hands—are nearly all of the Tartary breed; and very wiry little mounts they make, as the writer himself can testify, he having been one of a party of fifteen who in 1876 made the trip from Tien-Tsin to Pekin and its surroundings, as far as the Great Wall. The capacity for work of these hardy little animals may be judged by their having had, on this occasion, to put in, on an average, quite ten hours a day; and at the end of it, so long as they were well watered, actual food did not seem to them of so great consequence. That these mettlesome ponies are vicious is undoubted; but that their sagacity is as marvellous as their powers of endurance may be concluded from the following incident.

It was towards the conclusion of this same Pekin trip that, one evening, three young officers became separated from the rest of the party. Darkness quickly coming on, and finding themselves thus stranded, alone in a strange land with not a soul in sight, they were somewhat at a loss what course to adopt. However, by mutual consent it was decided to leave the matter to the ponies. Accordingly, each, letting the reins lie loose upon the neck of his steed, lighted his pipe and sat his saddle, trusting rather to the sagacity of the animal he bestrode than to his own individual effort once more to reach inhabited regions. That particular part of the country, it must be remembered, was some hundred miles from the ponies' homes.

Nothing eventful occurred to break the monotony of the procession in Indian file until suddenly the leading pony pulled up abruptly and, notwithstanding repeated urgings with whip and spur, refused to budge an inch. So dense was the darkness, that to discover the cause, the leading horseman determined to dis-



AFTER THROWING HIS RIDER, HE WOULD GALLOP OFF AS HARD AS HE COULD

mount; and he had nearly done so, when he was arrested by observing that his pony was trembling violently all over, at the same time giving vent to a peculiar nervous sort of whinnying. Fearing he knew not what, and scarce knowing how best to act, he began striking wax matches, when by their imperfect light he saw, immediately ahead, what appeared to be a huge boulder blocking up the path they were traversing, which in turn seemed to be nothing more nor less than a pass or gorge, so narrow that had the rider actually dismounted, he would have found no foothold, but would have been precipitated into space.

Communicating his discoveries to his companions, it was unanimously voted there was nothing better to be done than to 'sit tight' and 'wish for the day'—that is, unless the ponies should decide otherwise. As it turned out, the good little animals stood there, like veritable statues, throughout the night; and during the long dreary hours that intervened the three young fellows made the additional discovery that, besides, it would seem, a precipitous drop to depths unknown lying on their left, on the right of them was a sheer rise in the cliff, or hill; and as the night dragged on, by breaking off chunks of clay and bits of rock, and dropping them from the near side, it was amply demonstrated, by the lengthened interval that elapsed before any sort of sound reached their ears, that they were in an extremely hazardous position.

At last daylight came, and with it the assurance of their forebodings. It appeared the ponies had safely brought them, in the pitchy darkness, some distance along a dangerous hill pass, until the leader had been abruptly brought to a standstill as he encountered the immense boulder that had evidently freshly fallen from above, and now effectually blocked further passage. The conclusions they had arrived at during the night were also verified; for, whilst on their right the declivity was almost perpendicular, the fall on the left of them took a precipitous drop to some fifty feet below. Nothing but the sagacity and patience of their mounts could have saved them from disaster, if not death.

They all eventually got out of this 'tight place;' for the ponies, developing for the nonce the quality of docility, each in turn permitted its rider to climb on to the boulder over its head and shoulders, taking the reins with him, and then without much urging the little beast scrambled to the summit of the obstructing rock, and descended on the opposite side—for all the world like a goat. Ton-chow (on the Peiho) was safely reached a few hours later, where the three rejoined their companions, none

the worse for an experience in riding not easily to be forgotten, for the authenticity of which, also, the writer vouches, the party of three having consisted of two brother officers and himself.

Even from this necessarily limited treatment of the subject, the reader will, it is hoped, have gathered that life in the Royal Navy, instead of, as might be supposed, cutting one off from all possibility of indulging in the pleasures of riding, rather holds out to the seaman lover of such pastime many opportunities denied the landsman—such, for instance, as those afforded in the sampling of steeds of all countries, not to mention the more varied scenes passed through in his pursuit of this form of recreation, together with so much greater a possibility of adventure than is usually encountered in a ride round Rotten Row or canter over peaceful English fields and along quiet country roads.

SPINNING FOR THAMES TROUT

BY W. PAYNE COLLIER

THE Thames trout being, it is admitted, one of the best fighting fish that swim, if not the best, I have ventured to think it may be interesting to many, and information to some, to know what is the most sportsmanlike manner of proceeding about his capture.

No fish requires the exercise of more patience or skill in his circumvention than he does; therefore if a fisherman has sufficient perseverance and pluck to make an attack on him, he (the angler) need not go out with any highly polished hope of coming off victorious. But such good sport will one hooked fish give that it will make up for many disappointments.

I have little knowledge of the matter of betting, yet I have always fancied the feeling created, when you have the good fortune to catch one of these beauties, is very much akin to that felt by an habitual plunger when he gets a *coup* which he can place against his numerous losses.

As I have already said, Thames trouting is very disappointing work (yes, it is work, and often very hard work too), and one of the few days I have had with a professional fisherman was the most disastrous that it has ever been my luck to encounter. As an angler I need hardly say these are not few in number.

If anyone meets with mishaps, those which fishermen experience can beat the rest of humanity into a cocked hat. It

would seem sometimes as though the devil were laying traps so that they might perjure their souls beyond redemption at every yard they go.

No matter what kind of fishing you are doing—worming, gentling, flying, or spinning—if matters begin badly you may as a rule—mind, I say as a rule—stake your life that they will continue so all through the day. In no person is that text repeated by Burley in Sir Walter Scott's novel, when leaving Morton, better exemplified than in a fisherman: 'A heavy yoke was ordained for the sons of Adam from the day they go out of their mother's womb till the day that they return to the mother of all things, from him who is clothed in blue silk and weareth a crown even to him who weareth simple linen—wrath, envy, trouble and inquietness, rigour, strife, and fear of death in the time of rest.'

It was the realisation of an anxious wish when I made arrangements with a professional, who had known me from boyhood, for a day's trouting. I had looked forward to everything, of course, being as it should be, and I must at once say that it was no fault of his if matters did not turn out as I had expected. No man on the Thames knew better how to work the oracle than my man, and no man had had more experience. I must admit that I had some trouble to persuade him to turn out in the morning as early as I think fish are the most likely to be caught—that is, before breakfast; but after some little argument he at last consented to begin operations at 6 A.M., wet or fine, and we made the appointment for Maidenhead Bridge. I arranged that I would bring my own rod and all the extras, with the exception of the flights for the baits. Had I suggested to use any others except those tied by himself, I knew that I should have committed an offence that six months' hard labour would not have expiated. The greater number of professional fishermen have some hobby of which they are very proud, and it is as well, if you want to have a comfortable day, to study their little craze in such particulars. I met him as we had agreed I should, but as the river was going down rather large, he suggested we had better try Boulter's Weir pool first; so I proposed that I should walk up the towing-path as far as the lock, which is about half a mile above the bridge. This I did, and on my way up looked in at the Raymead Hotel and had my 'mornings.' On boarding the punt I found that as soon as we came into the main stream the professional could hardly make any headway, the water being so heavy. Taking the other punt pole I attempted to give him some help; but, not being

LIKE A STREAK OF SILVER, OUT OF THE WATER SPRANG A BEAUTIFUL TROUT

quick enough, or perhaps a bit bumble-handed, got my pole jammed underneath the punt and had to let go my hold to save myself from being pulled overboard: we had to go down as far as Taplow mills before we recovered *that* pole. This was only our first misfortune, yet at the time I little thought how much it was a forerunner of disaster.

At length having recovered it up we went again, and this time, both punting on the same side, we managed matters better, eventually arriving at the weir, to which Z., the professional, made fast.

Then I put my rod together, he attaching *his* flight to my trace, yet, while doing so, keeping up a pretty grumble about the size of my swivels, complaining that they were too small.

'Never fear,' I said, 'I've vaselined them well this morning, and I never found the line kink when that is done.'

'May be,' he said, 'but when I was young they never had no waseline, only a bit of 'og's lard, and seldom that.'

Here it will be necessary to make a slight digression, as though in these days of progression many men know how a Thames spinning flight is tied, yet it will not be out of place to give a short description of its tying here. A Thames flight consists of three triangles and a lip hook. The triangles are placed about three-quarters of an inch apart, according to the size of the bait (dead bleak) to be used, and the lip hook with an eye is run on the gut above them.

The mode of baiting is as follows. First one of the hooks of the bottom triangle is passed through the tail just where it joins the body. The second triangle is fixed in the same manner in the middle of the side of the fish, and the third in the shoulder. Now the lip hook is passed down the gut till it curves the bait properly, then made fast by a couple of half-turns, and the lip hook passed through *both* lips of the fish. Great care must be taken to get the proper curve, or it will not spin truly, but with a little practice and attention to the subject you will soon be able to catch the trick.

Having given this definition of the manner in which the best flight I have ever used is tied and baited, I will again proceed with my story.

'Now Z.,' I asked, when he had finished his grumble, 'how shall I work the pool?'

'Across and down, sir,' he replied.

So I started off, and had not made more than three casts when, as I drew the bait near to the punt, it was seized and held by

a beastly 'jack,' who made one short run, and snap went the trace as he closed his teeth on it.

'Dang the brute!' said Z., 'they always be's about when they're not wanted. You might have fished here for a year, sir, if you'd had a gimp trace, and never a seed one.'

'Never mind, Z.,' said I, 'put me up another flight and I'll try again.'

He did so, I, as is my usual custom, watching every turn of his fingers as he placed the bait into its proper position. This is where the fun comes in, or rather I should say the spinning—but it's all the same, because if the bait does not spin regularly and smoothly when trout fishing you might, for all the fun you would have, put your hat on the hooks.

When Z. had completed the business, which he did in much less time than it has taken to write the above lines, I began to fish again; but before doing so he let the punt drop down stream some ten yards, holding it in position with his pole.

Then I made a cast, and was just about to make another, when not far from us, like a streak of silver, out of the water sprang a beautiful trout of about 6 lbs. Neither of us said a word, but a mutual look told our satisfaction. Up moved the punt again, and I looked to see if all was clear for throwing. Then I made a cast of about forty yards, bringing the line back to me coil by coil at my feet.

'Not too fast, sir,' said Z. As he spoke there came a sudden check on the line, and I struck. Then there was a pause for a few seconds (it seemed about half an hour to me), when whir-r-r-r went the reel, and out the fish flashed from the water, his beautiful colour standing out in all its splendour in the sun, the light of which at that moment broke through the clouds. But as he touched his native element the line came back to me, and he was gone to the fathomless depths of the pool.

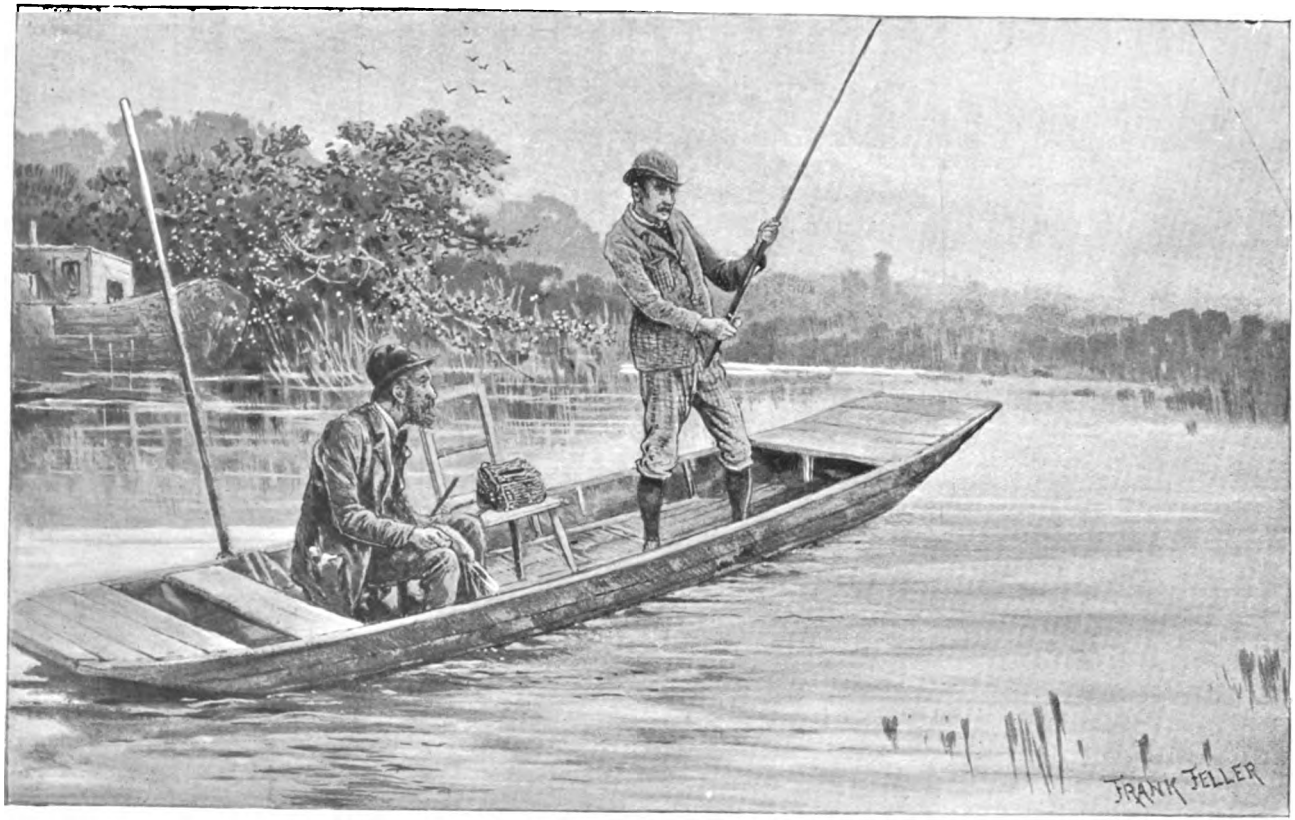
I did *not* say anything, but sat down on the well of the punt and looked at Z. His face was a picture of misery and despair, and, I thought, a bit contemptuous.

'You held him too tight, sir, when he jumped,' was his conciliating remark.

'Oh, yes, perhaps. Say it's my fault,' was my reply.

'You didn't lower the point of your rod sufficient, sir,' he again volunteered.

'Didn't I? Well, that is a matter of opinion, Z. It is a vexed question,' I continued, 'even among the highest authorities, as to how a rod should be placed when a fish jumps.' He did not seem



THE BAIT WAS STOPPED WITH A SMART JERK

satisfied; but I explained that, though it was far from my intention to teach my grandmother that ancient game of extracting the contents of an egg. 'Yet,' I said, 'with all due deference to other authorities who have expressed opinions on the matter, I have always found that you must take into consideration the position of your fish, in reference to the matter as to whether you should raise or lower your rod, or remain "as you were." Be the fish well down stream below you, I would say slightly lower your rod—most decidedly. If he is above you, raise your rod gently, as he will, the chances are, fall towards you. But when the fish is right opposite to you across the stream, as this one was, keep your rod "steady," as I did on this and have done on hundreds of more successful occasions.'

But now it was no use crying over spilt milk, so we wetted our lips (by the bye the wetter was *milk* with something added), and having put on a fresh bait I continued to fish.

Soon we reach the mill-tail by the lock, where we were going down the centre of the stream, when again the bait was held, but let go again before I could strike.

'Drop the bait to him,' said Z., speaking very quickly.

I did so, but he would not come again, try how I would. So the bait being spoilt (bleak are very tender, and won't stand much rough water), we made fast to Sir Roger Palmer's steam-launch house, and had something to eat. Having renewed our energy by filling the inner man, we again made an attack on a wily beauty of the Thames we had seen, during our simple repast, feeding on the small fry under Raymead campshed.

I was in capital form that morning, and cast several times right into the side, making hardly any splash, and not touching the wood. But as soon as I tried one spot the trout would feed in another, until suddenly the bait was stopped with a smart jerk, and, striking, I knew I was into something very heavy. 'That's a beauty,' I exclaimed, and anxiously cast my eye over the coils of line at my feet to see all was clear. But the fish never moved, and at last Z. said:

'Strike him again, sir.'

I did so, pretty hard too, but no movement came, and at last Z. began to laugh, and turning to him I inquired what was the cause of his merriment.

'You've got it, sir!'

'Got what?' I inquired somewhat impatiently.

'The anchor, sir,' he replied, still laughing heartily, and continued: 'It's the *Miranda's* anchor, sir. The young gents was

a sky-larking last night and lost it. Jim,' shouted Z. to the Jack of the water of the hotel, 'bring us a grappling.'

'What for?' halloed Jim.

'Why, my gent's caught the *Miranda's* anchor, I'll bet a crown,' and letting the punt down stream, he brought up just over where I was held fast. The grappling arrived, and after a few minutes the anchor was brought to the surface with my flight jammed on the flange. I must admit I was very much vexed, as our movements had disturbed what I had hoped would have been *my* fish.

Having put the anchor on shore with an intimation from Z. to Jim, to tell the *Miranda's* gents he would like to drink their health when he came up again, once more we went to work. But to save being tedious I must say that, though we tried every inch of the river—passing, I know, over a fish whose holt was at the end of the island opposite Skindle's hotel, and which fish saved his life for that season, not being caught until the day after the trouting season terminates on the Thames, when he was captured and returned by a Scotch lord—down half-way to Bray, we did not move another fish.

There is nothing very amusing in this story, but it will show the truth of that which I said at the commencement, when a day begins badly it generally continues so; and also, if you wish to be successful in Thames trouting, you must not be down-hearted at having a few blank days.

From what I hear, this grand fish is becoming more plentiful, but until that horrid poaching dodge called 'live baiting' is prohibited they cannot make any headway. Certainly there is a limit to the size that may be retained (2 lb., I believe), and we know that as trout grow older so much the more wary do they become. Yet let me ask you a question—What is the difference between a 'live bait' hanging on a float (half a cork is generally used) at the end of a rod and line, and the same bait exactly, set on a trimmer? The only explanation I can give is this—That on a preserved river the trimmer is *called* poaching and is poaching, and the other is *called* fishing and is in reality nothing more nor less than daylight poaching. *Dixi!*

THE SEASON'S FOOTBALL

BY CAPTAIN PHILIP TREVOR

ASSOCIATION football in England is no longer a pastime. It has become an industry. And it is an industry, too, which those who control other industries cannot affect to disregard. The large employer of labour in Birmingham, Sheffield, and other head-quarters of famous clubs knows that, however pressing may be the orders in course of execution by the firm, a League match in the neighbourhood will seriously deplete his workshops for half or the whole of a day, as the case may be. The individuals who have ever played the game, even in its most pristine shape, do not number two per cent. of the huge crowds who flock to the big matches; and it is the result of the game, and not the form displayed therein, that interests all but an infinitesimal minority of the hundreds of thousands of human beings who every week attend Association football fixtures. There is, of course, a germ of British sportsmanship in the mere desire to take part in a contest, even as a spectator, as the Irishman said; but for the most part the stream of professionalism has swept sportsmanship away, and it lingers only in some 'Corinthian' nook or in some 'Casual' cranny.

Organised football is only a thing of comparatively recent growth in England, but even in the memory of young men a change has come over the spirit of the game. It is not difficult to find apt illustrations of this fact, and one in particular occurs to me at the moment. A cup tie was played between two

famous professional clubs with a definite result. The defeated side thereupon appealed against that result on the ground that the names of the winning eleven had not been furnished to the office the statutory number of days in advance. The press took the matter up from that point, and gravely discussed its legality or illegality as it stood. The losing side, it was admitted, were aware of the state of affairs before the day of the match, yet they had no hesitation in entering upon the game with this card 'up their sleeve.' In a business affair, and where a large stake is at issue, one is compelled to demand a strict adherence to the letter of the law; but it is not in this spirit that most of us were taught at school to take a beating in a manly English game. The unfortunate fact is, that it is only as a business that Association football really flourishes, and the questionable 'business methods'—the discussion of which men avoid in their private lives—have had their inevitable influence upon a hitherto healthy branch of athletics. We hear much of the blacklegs of the race-course, but it is possible to find their counterpart in other places. To discuss the question of professionalism on its merits would be far beyond the scope of a short paper, but whatever else it has done, professionalism has certainly crushed *esprit de corps* out of football. The big clubs retain 'a local habitation and a name' which has long since lost all significance. Sheffield Wednesday, Aston Villa, Preston North End, &c., are still their titles, and the followers of their fortunes may find the same man hailing originally from Glasgow, Southampton, or Newcastle figuring in the side of each one in the course of a few seasons. But it is all in order. His transfer papers have been prepared with all the detailed care and accuracy of the title deeds of a property, and his leasehold services have been acquired in accordance with the fluctuating conditions of the market and the then value of the article bartered. The old gladiator system lacked the completeness of the recognised procedure under which prominent football players are now bought, sold, and manipulated, but the balance of sportsmanship probably lies with the Romans.

The actual calibre of the individual, however, was probably never higher than at the moment, and the professional football player, like the professional bowler, stands far in advance of his amateur competitors. One of course at once looks for the interesting exception whenever a dogmatic rule is laid down. It is doubtful to this day whether the professional ranks of cricketers have ever produced such a bowler as Mr. A. G. Steel, who decided to close his first-class career far too soon; and professional

football players cannot yet boast a man as great in the game as Mr. G. O. Smith. Like Mr. C. B. Fry, Mr. Smith can play cricket and a few other games too, and, like Mr. Fry, Mr. Smith scored a century in the University match and converted an almost inevitable defeat into a victory. Mr. Smith, when the first English football eleven of the season was selected in January last, was the only amateur who was found worthy of inclusion in the side, and he was very properly re-elected captain. Opinions differ as to whether in the past few months he was quite at his very best as a centre forward. Possibly he played a shade more unevenly than in previous years; but the most ordinary observer cannot fail to be struck by his extraordinary knowledge of the game, and it is an education in itself to watch his play in front of goal. It is not, however, when the forwards are performing like clockwork that the student will learn the most from Mr. Smith. Like Napoleon of old, he requires dark surroundings in order to shine effectually. If the play on one of his wings is going in a jerky, spasmodic, fitful manner, it is then that Mr. Smith's resources are called into action. The enemy are not slow to seize upon the weak spot, and it is in the moment of their apparent victory that Mr. Smith's counter-attacks are apt to be so fatally accurate. One, of course, cannot urge that Mr. Smith fills the same place in the football world that Dr. Grace has long held in the cricket world, but he is intellectually and executively quite the greatest Association player who has yet been known.

Temper has an extraordinary, possibly an undue, influence upon the results of the Association football matches played by the leading League clubs. When a visiting team wins an out match, a section of the press, and a still larger section of the public, are apt to overwhelm them with congratulation. They have beaten their opponents, it is triumphantly stated, in their own country and on their own ground. Were the winners a Metropolitan Rugby Union Club, there might be a shade of excuse for the enthusiasm.

Men who play football as a recreation and as a healthy means of exercise cannot always devote the necessary time to travelling which a match away from home demands. Consequently, the visiting fifteen is often much below its normal strength, and an unexpected defeat ensues. In League matches this is not the case. The eleven men selected to represent the club, and who are paid to do so, are ordered to proceed to a certain place at a certain date just as if they were private soldiers or commercial travellers.

Nor is there any dark secret in a football ground. At cricket, especially in changeable weather, it is an obvious advantage thoroughly to know the ground, its peculiarities and its possibilities. No such plea can be put forward in the case of football. It is the attitude of the spectators who surround the ground, and not the ground itself, that is the important factor in the case. The visiting team are accompanied, often through the medium of special trains, by a large crowd of supporters. This crowd meets a larger crowd of the supporters of the opponents, and the two masses of human beings shout against each other from the beginning to the end of the match. Their partisanship is not usually limited to shouting, and the referee who does not insure against accidents is a foolish man. At exciting fixtures the duties of the police are not always in the nature of sinecure, and though only flagrant cases come under the notice of magistrates or the football authorities, there is a sufficiency of black and white evidence to indicate the state of affairs that too often exists on such occasions. The proceedings in question are not without their effect upon the players, and in some undefined way it is taken for granted, the teams being evenly matched on their merits, that the one in whose favour popular clamour runs the higher has the better chance of success. This is a regrettable and peculiar condition of affairs, when it is borne in mind that the twenty-two men engaged in the match are invariably players of great skill, and usually men of great experience.

There is not a shadow of a doubt that scarcely one of these big matches takes place without an accompaniment of much ill-feeling that does not cease with the conclusion of the game; nor is there any use cloaking the fact that sometimes—though more often by the spectators than by the players—blows are exchanged. I confidently assert that in Rugby Union football such occurrences are rare in the extreme, and in London clubs they are quite unknown. From the nature of the rules the temptation to resentment is far greater in the Rugby game than in the Association, and it is for the man who is not committed as a partisan to one or the other to draw his own deductions. For the most part during the past season the famous organisations maintained their form and reputation, but Preston North End has a place far lower down the League list than most people anticipated. Liverpool has established an undeniable position, and Aston Villa, Sheffield United, &c., still hold their own. In the south of England the Association game has made enormous strides.

Southampton have shown that their last year's form had not been over-estimated, and generally speaking there has been an increase of membership in the southern clubs. Distinctly, however, one of the most remarkable features of the year was the forming of the Richmond Association Football Club. To start an Association club in Richmond was bearding the Rugby Union lion in his den. Yet the experiment met with immediate and unqualified success. A long and excellent programme had been prepared, and on many occasions the crowd at these matches compared favourably with that which was watching the Richmond Rugby club and the London Scottish on the adjoining ground. Judging from recent evidence the development next year is likely to be greater still.

Association football in the army is now as recognised an institution as the coffee-shop or the canteen. Throughout the service the greatest interest is taken in the competition for the Army Cup, and if Tommy Atkins were consulted, he would sooner part with the regimental band than with the regimental football eleven. For many, and probably for sufficient, reasons, Rugby Union football is not encouraged by the military authorities; and, though occasional instances of a corps fifteen are forthcoming, it is with the Association game that army football is identified. The keenness shown is not limited to inter-regimental matches, and besides having ordinary fixtures with civilian clubs, regimental elevens enter frequently in all League competitions in their own neighbourhood for which they are eligible. The Portsmouth gunners, indeed, had the pluck or hardihood to become competitors with the first-class elevens in the Southern League, and though they did not succeed in reaching a high place on the list, they seldom failed to give their powerful opponents a good game, and their centre forward, Sergeant Hanna, was awarded International honours. This partiality for football which has sprung up in the service of recent years is itself a healthy sign of the times, but there is a grave danger that it may be both the precursor and the associate of much that is extremely undesirable.

Formerly such athletics as there were in regimental life were instituted, fostered, and directed by the officers. It is an excellent thing to see Thomas Atkins now acting in this matter upon his own initiative, but the necessity for direction is not removed in consequence. He enlists, perhaps, in a place where football is an industry, and he brings with him to the colours both the tastes and the taints of his own immediate neighbourhood. He wants

to play for a badge, a medal, a cup, and where such rewards or distinctions are not open to him, his interest in the match is sensibly discounted. Whatever may be said in favour of such decorations, emblems, or toys, their distribution is certainly not in accordance with the old spirit of sportsmanship which used to obtain in the service. The deed is worth the doing. That was the idea which prevailed until recently, and though a badge of silk or a bit of silver is in itself a harmless gift, there is no doubt that an unreal importance has become attached to its possession. Where there is an all-absorbing desire to secure a thing, it requires a man to be possessed of fine strains of honour to avoid employing questionable means of obtaining his end. The Army Football Association have begun to recognise this fact. Indeed, they have been compelled to do so. A more capable and impartial directing authority it would be impossible to find in the football world; but the admirable officers who compose it have no easy task, whilst carrying out their administrative work in accordance with their defined regulations, to preserve by their influence that tone for which all sport and athletics in the service has long been famous. Their difficulty is that in the large majority of cases men join with ready-made notions as regards the ethics of football, and these notions are not exactly what most of us would care to inculcate.

If the civil authorities of Association football would take in hand the question of sportsmanship as zealously and capably as they catered for and arranged its details, army football would improve proportionately, and not only those interested in football, but a far larger community, would be under an obligation to them, the value of which few would be prepared to under-estimate.

Rugby Union football has as many crises in its life as a healthy child, and it surmounts them all with the same radiant self-complacency. It is always tumbling downstairs and always getting up again little the worse for the fall. The pessimists on each occasion say: 'Wait a little. The injury is internal and will make itself felt later on.' Up to date, however, history is against them.

The loss of a match by the English International fifteen is invariably seized upon as an opportunity for asserting the decadence of the Rugby Union game in England. True, out of the last twenty games with Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, the English team has only won some half-dozen; still, arguments based merely on these statistics must be received with a great deal of caution. If the sole aim of the Rugby Union committee

in the past season had been to win the International matches, they would have been well advised to limit the area of their selection and to choose a team in which a certain amount of combination was assured at the outset. Richmond, Blackheath, Gloucester, and Northumberland could furnish fifteen players who would certainly have made a powerful International side. But the committee, having regard to the various interests which they have to control, must be diplomatists as well as administrators, and, with avowed opposition outside their ranks and with murmurings within, they have to be careful not to give offence. An England cap, too, has come to be looked upon somewhat in the light of the conferring of a degree, and the individual players who have done or are doing well during the season expect the reward of their prowess.

The Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Unions are troubled with no such scruples, and, thoroughly recognising the value of combination, they select their international sides solely with a view to winning the match in hand and without regard to the supposed or admitted claims of individual players. In each of these countries, therefore, a certain style has become habitual. A Welsh team, for instance, is always noticeable for the combination of its three-quarter backs. An Irish team will indulge in a direct front attack by the forwards by means of a series of short sharp rushes, whilst generally speaking a Scotch fifteen is remarkable for the screwing and wheeling tactics of the forwards, clever footwork in the open, and a combined attempt on the part of the back to break up the passing game of their opponents. In the English teams there is always a multiplicity of styles and a divergence of methods, and the spectacle therefore is too often afforded of a set of men, individually perhaps superior to their opponents, frittering away their strength by spasmodic play without cohesion. The explanation is that almost all the big clubs in England have their distinctive peculiarities, and even a casual spectator could not fail to be struck by the different characteristics of metropolitan, western, midland, and northern clubs respectively. Under the circumstances, it would be strange if the International fifteen did not slightly savour of what is tersely dubbed a 'job lot.' It is, therefore, a misleading method of gauging the state of Rugby Union football in England or elsewhere to draw deductions from a single International match, or even from a series of such matches. A study of the history and condition of the leading first-class clubs is the safer and more rational course to adopt. So far from there being any falling off in the collective calibre of the

famous teams, the reverse is the case. Not only, with just a few exceptions, have clubs with reputations increased those reputations, but also many organisations which have hitherto been known as second-class have put forward indisputable claims to a step in rank. Of these one of the most noteworthy is the Croydon Club. It contains no man who has been selected for a representative match, yet all through the season it has been noticeable for its consistent form—form, by the way, which was as apparent in its few defeats as in its many victories. As an instance of the opposite state of affairs the performances of the Richmond Club may be noticed. In all three International matches the Richmond Club furnished more members of the English fifteen than any other club in the kingdom, yet the club lost exactly twice as many games as it won.

Three or four men can no more make a club fifteen than one swallow a summer. Combination, from being a desirable characteristic, has now become an essential ingredient—in fact, an absolute necessity—in Rugby football. Probably we shall see no more Arthur Goulds or Stoddarts. The day of the individual player is gone never to return, and, paradoxical as it may appear to those who do not study the game closely, a man loses his chance of selection for an important team by being too prominent. It is not a question of what a man can do *per se*; it is what he can do for his friends that is the important point. A reservation of course must be made in the case of the full-back, who is always compelled to act entirely upon his own account. In the past season two full-backs advanced from comparative obscurity to international honours. Mr. H. T. Gamlin, known to cricketers as a member of the Somersetshire eleven, was awarded his cap for England on a couple of occasions in spite of the fact that he had as a competitor so famous—indeed so great—a player as Mr. Frank Byrne. Scotland paid a similar honour to Mr. H. Rottenburg, a Cambridge undergraduate, and there can be no doubt that the distinction was well deserved. One other player was also noticeable for rapid promotion. Three weeks before the University match Mr. J. Daniell, also a Cambridge undergraduate, had not been heard of as a forward in important games. Three weeks after the match he was playing for England. One, however, could not presume to call any of these gentlemen great players in the sense that Mr. Stoddart or Mr. Arthur Gould was a great player. Each of these two famous men of the past was a centre three-quarter back—a position that has been rightly described as the pivot of the game. The past season was not

remarkable for anything so much as for the dearth of centre three-quarter backs. Scotland, Ireland, and England in particular ransacked the resources at their disposal to fill the post in question, and with a very limited amount of success. Beaten in both of their first two matches, the English executive in the last International fixture resorted to the experiment of trying a new man, Mr. J. C. Matters, and of importuning that clever player, Mr. W. L. Bunting, to emerge from his retirement in order to be his partner. Wales was in a happier condition, and Mr. Gwyn Nicholls showed that Mr. Arthur Gould's tuition had not been thrown away. But Mr. Nicholls is not a three-quarter back of the old school. It does not dawn upon the spectator that Mr. Nicholls is doing anything in particular. As the game wears on, however, one begins to realise that his partners are always receiving the ball at a favourable moment and sometimes with a clear field. Mr. Nicholls himself appears to be almost stationary, and it is what he enables others to do rather than what he does himself that is of such inestimable value to his side.

It was this capacity for cohesion in which the Richmond men were deficient, and in which the Croydon men excelled, that caused the record of the two clubs to be so widely different. *Par excellence* the fifteen of the year was furnished by the Gloucester club. Week after week its series of victories was unchecked. Meanwhile, the Welsh clubs were beating the English clubs, and the decay of English football was loudly proclaimed by the pessimists. However, the Gloucester men were equal to the task of stemming the tide of defeat. In quick succession they routed Llanelly, Swansea, and Cardiff, and thus gave a further proof of the solid excellence of their team. Now the Gloucester fifteen contains only two men, Messrs. Frank and Percy Stout, who are International players; and it is worthy of remark that several of the club's most brilliant victories were won in the absence of one or other (in two cases of both) of the famous brothers. The well-known Blackheath club quite maintained its reputation. It won the large majority of its matches, yet in the last International game the English Rugby Union committeemen could not find a place for one of its members in the side which they selected. It was, however, in the West of England and in the Midlands that the game made the greatest strides. The Devonport Albion Club—chiefly composed of working men—was mainly responsible for winning the championship of the South for Devonshire, who decisively beat Kent in the match which decided the matter. The Kent fifteen, it may be in-

cidentally remarked, was largely composed of men who had learnt their football at the public schools and at the universities. The Midland clubs, Leicester, Northampton, and Coventry in particular, started the season with a rush of success. But speaking generally, when pitted against the chief Welsh, Western, and Metropolitan fifteens later in the year, they hardly maintained their early form. More attention is paid in the Midlands to attack than to defence, and in some cases, therefore, they were hoist with their own petard.

In a review of the season, to whatever brevity it may be curtailed, a reference to the Rugby game in the North of England is inevitable. One cannot hope ever to reconcile those who hold diametrically opposite views on the subject of the Northern Union. Whether the custom of playing for money should be recognised by the Rugby authorities as it is by the Association authorities is a question by itself, and one that should be decided upon principle and not upon expediency. But that the action of the Northern Union in seceding has really injured the Rugby Union game is difficult to prove. If, as Rugby Unionists are bound to believe, the limb were diseased, it were better lopped off. Veiled professionalism is quite another matter. Unreality is always a source of danger, but the evil, the extent of which it is necessarily difficult to discover, is to be met by influence and the judicious direction of public feeling rather than by legislation. However, the Rugby Union committee have learnt their lesson, and are not likely to repeat their indiscretions of two years ago. There are as good players in the Northern Counties to-day who owe allegiance to the Rugby Union as there were in the days before the separation. True, club football has suffered somewhat, for it cannot be denied that the large number of clubs who had established their reputations before the date of the great schism have now thrown in their lot with the Northern Union.

Let it be borne in mind, however, that not an inconsiderable number of these acted under compulsion. They wanted football, and had they remained loyal they would have had to console themselves with the excitement of an occasional game, with such moral satisfaction as is to be derived from a policy of splendid isolation. Let it also be remembered that the Northern Union scheme is still in the tentative stage. A little undue greed on the part of its servants and a little reaction of public opinion and its existence is immediately threatened. A graceful decline is in its case an impossibility. It must either flourish or suffer sudden death. These considerations have already been present to the minds of

its half-hearted though hard-headed supporters, of whom there are not a few. The fathers of Danes Inn, therefore, should make easy the return of repentant prodigals. They need not kill the fatted calf to celebrate the event, but they might open the door—the back door if necessary—without a fuss. To err is human. Amateur Rugby Union football is in no peril. As long as the English boy has English characteristics he will play the game for the love of the thing, and boys have a habit of growing up without wholly discarding their early training, especially where that training coincides with their inclinations. The only danger lies with the governing body. A tendency to be doing is invariably connected with an unpaid committee composed of enthusiasts. It is only the calculating business man or politician, whose heart is not touched, who is convinced of the priceless value on occasions of masterly inactivity. A couple of years ago, in a moment of righteous indignation, the Rugby Union committee framed and issued a sheaf of petty restrictions which were supposed effectually to repress professionalism in the future, and which, fortunately for the well-being of a magnificent game, provoked mirth and not wrath. These well-intentioned gentlemen erred in good company. Acquired wisdom has, however, succeeded these genuine, whole-hearted, but rather childish ebullitions of feeling. Rugby Union football pleads like the repentant private soldier to be 'given a chance.' Irritating legislation, which removes one grievance and creates nine more grievances in its place, has been too much in evidence in the past. Latterly a much wiser course has been taken. If interference is only withheld for still a little longer the natural vitality of Rugby football cannot fail to assert itself, and one of the most character-forming and educational of English games that has ever been known will be preserved unimpaired, to the huge benefit of the youth of the land.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.

BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

No. VII. A MISDEAL

THE wagonette slewed and slackened mysteriously on the top of the long hill above Drumcurran. So many remarkable things had happened since we had entrusted ourselves to the guidance of Mr. Bernard Shute that I rose in my place and possessed myself of the brake, and in so doing saw the horses with their heads hard in against their chests and their quarters jammed crookedly against the splashboard, being apparently tied into knots by some inexplicable power.

'Someone's pulling the reins out of my hand!' exclaimed Mr. Shute.

The horses and pole were by this time making an acute angle with the wagonette, and the groom plunged from the box to their heads. Miss Sally Knox, who was sitting beside me, looked over the edge.

'Put on the brake! the reins are twisted round the axle!' she cried, and fell into a fit of laughter.

We all—that is to say, Philippa, Miss Shute, Miss Knox, and I—got out as speedily as might be; but, I think, without panic;

Mr. Shute alone stuck to the ship, with the horses struggling and rearing below him. The groom and I contrived to back them, and by so doing caused the reins to unwind themselves from the axle.

'It was my fault,' said Mr. Shute, hauling them in as fast as we could give them to him, 'I broke the reins yesterday, and these are the phaeton ones, and about six fathoms long at that, and I forgot and let the slack go overboard. It's all right, I won't do it again.'

With this reassurance we confided ourselves once more to the wagonette.

A DEN KNOWN AS THE CALF HOUSE

As we neared the town of Drumcurran the fact that we were on our way to a horse fair became alarmingly apparent. It is impossible to imagine how we pursued an uninjured course through the companies of horsemen, the crowded carts, the squealing colts, the irresponsible led horses, and, most immutable of all obstacles, the groups of countrywomen, with the hoods of their heavy blue cloaks over their heads. They looked like nuns of some obscure order; they were deaf and blind as ramparts of sandbags; nothing less callous to human life than a Parisian cabdriver could have burst a way through them. Many times during that drive I had cause to be thankful for the sterling qualities of Mr. Shute's brake; with its aid he dragged his over-

fed bays into a crawl that finally, and not without injury to the varnish, took the wagonette to the Royal Hotel. Every available stall in the yard was by that time filled, and it was only by virtue of the fact that the kitchenmaid was nearly related to my cook that the indignant groom was permitted to stable the bays in a den known as the calf-house.

That I should have lent myself to such an expedition was wholly due to my wife. Since Philippa had taken up her residence in Ireland she had discovered a taste for horses that was not to be extinguished, even by an occasional afternoon on the Quaker, whose paces had become harder than rock in his many journeys to Petty Sessions; she had also discovered the Shutes, new comers on the outer edge of our vast visiting district, and between them this party to Drumcurran Horse Fair had been devised. Philippa proposed to buy herself a hunter. Bernard Shute wished to do the same, possibly two hunters, money being no difficulty with this fortunate young man. Miss Sally Knox was of the company, and I also had been kindly invited, as to a missionary meeting, to come, and bring my cheque-book. The only saving clause in the affair was the fact that Mr. Flurry Knox was to meet us at the scene of action.

The fair was held in a couple of large fields outside the town, and on the further bank of the Curranhilty River. Across a wide and glittering ford, horses of all sizes and sorts were splashing, and a long row of stepping stones was hopped, and staggered, and scrambled over by a ceaseless variety of foot passengers. A man with a cart plied as a ferry boat, doing a heavy trade among the applewomen, and vendors of 'crubeens,' *alias* pigs' feet, a grisly delicacy peculiar to Irish open-air holiday-making, and the July sun blazed on a scene that even Miss Cecilia Shute found to be almost repayment enough for the alarms of the drive.

'As a rule, I am so bored by driving that I find it reviving to be frightened,' she said to me, as we climbed to safety on a heathery ridge above the fields dedicated to galloping the horses; 'but when my brother scraped all those people off one side of that car, and ran the pole into the cart of lemonade-bottles, I began to wish for courage to tell him I was going to get out and walk home.'

'Well, if you only knew it,' said Bernard, who was spreading rugs over the low furze bushes in the touching belief that the prickles would not come through, 'the time you came nearest to walking home was when the lash of the whip got twisted round Nancy's tail. Miss Knox, you're an authority on these things—

don't you think it would be a good scheme to have a light anchor in the trap, and when the horses began to play the fool, you'd heave the anchor over the fence and bring them up all standing?'

'They wouldn't stand very long,' remarked Miss Sally.

'Oh, that's all right,' returned the inventor; 'I'd have a dodge to cast them loose, with the pole and the splinter-bar.'

'You'd never see them again,' responded Miss Knox demurely, 'if you thought that mattered.'

'It would be the brightest feature of the case,' said Miss Shute.

She was surveying Miss Sally through her pincenez as she spoke, and was, I have reason to believe, deciding that by the end of the day her brother would be well on in the first stages of his fifteenth love affair.

It has possibly been suspected that Mr. Bernard Shute was a sailor, had been a sailor rather, until within the last year, when he had tumbled into a fortune and a property, and out of the navy, in the shortest time on record. His enthusiasm for horses had been nourished by the hirelings of Malta, and other resorts of Her Majesty's ships, and his knowledge of them was, so far, bounded by the fact that it was more usual to come off over their heads than their tails. For the rest, he was a clean-shaved and personable youth, with a laugh which I may, without offensive intention, define as possessing a what-cheeriness special to his profession, and a habit, engendered no doubt by long sojourns at the Antipodes, of getting his clothes in large hideous consignments from a naval outfitter.

It was eleven o'clock, and the fair was in full swing. Its vortex was in the centre of the field below us, where a low bank of sods and earth had been erected as a trial jump, with a yelling crowd of men and boys at either end, acting instead of the usual wings to prevent a swerve. Strings of reluctant horses were scourged over the bank by dozens of willing hands, while exhortation, cheers, and criticism were freely showered upon each performance.

'Give the knees to the saddle, boy, and leave the heels slack.' 'That's a nice horse. He'd keep a jock on his back where another'd throw him!' 'Well jumped, begor! She fled that fairly!' as an ungainly three-year-old flounced over the bank without putting a hoof on it. Then her owner, unloosing his pride in simile after the manner of his race,

'Ah ha! when she give a lep, man, she's that free, she's like a hare for it!'

A giggling group of country girls elbowed their way past us out of the crowd of spectators, one of the number inciting her fellows to hurry on to the other field 'until they'd see the lads galloping the horses,' to which another responding that she'd 'be skinned alive for the horses,' the party sped on their way. We—*i.e.* my wife, Miss Knox, Bernard Shute, and myself—followed in their wake, a matter by no means as easy as it looked. Miss Shute had exhibited her wonted intelligence by remaining on the hill-top with the 'Spectator;' she had not reached the happy point of possessing a mind ten years older than her age, and a face ten years younger, without also developing the gift of scenting boredom from afar. We squeezed past the noses and heels of fidgetty horses, and circumnavigated their attendant groups of critics, while half-trained brutes in snaffles bolted to nowhere and back again, and whinnying foals ran to and fro in search of their mothers.

A moderate bank divided the upper from the lower fields, and as every feasible spot in it was commanded by a refusing horse, the choice of a place and moment for crossing it required judgment. I got Philippa across it in safety; Miss Knox, though as capable as any young woman in Ireland of getting over a bank, either on horseback or on her own legs, had to submit to the assistance of Mr. Shute, and the laws of dynamics decreed that a force sufficient to raise a bower anchor should hoist her seven stone odd to the top of the bank with such speed that she landed half on her knees and half in the arms of her pioneer. A group of portentously quiet men stood near, their eyes on the ground, their hands in their pockets; they were all dressed so much alike that I did not at first notice that Flurry Knox was among them; when I did, I perceived that his eyes, instead of being on the ground, were surveying Mr. Shute with that measure of disapproval that he habitually bestowed upon strange men.

'You're later than I thought you'd be,' he said. 'I have a horse half-bought for Mrs. Yeates. It's that old mare of Bobby Bennett's; she makes a little noise, but she's a good mare, and you couldn't throw her down if you tried. Bobby wants thirty pounds for her, but I think you might get her for less. She's in the hotel stables, and you can see her when you go to lunch.'

We moved on towards the rushy bank of the river, and Philippa and Sally Knox seated themselves on a low rock, looking, in their white frocks, as incongruous in that dingy preoccupied assemblage as the dreamy meadow-sweet and purple spires of loose strife that thronged the river banks. Bernard Shute had

been lost in the shifting maze of men and horses, who were, for the most part, galloping with the blind fury of charging bulls; but presently, among a party who seemed to be riding the finish of a race, we descried our friend, and a second or two later he hauled a brown mare to a standstill in front of us.

'The fellow's asking forty-five pounds for her,' he said to Miss Sally; 'she's a nailer to gallop. I don't think it's too much?'

'Her grandsire was the Mountain Hare,' said the owner of the mare, hurrying up to continue her family history, 'and he was the grandest horse in the four baronies. He was forty-two years of age when he died, and they waked him the same as ye'd wake a Christian. They had whisky and porther—and bread—and a piper in it.'

'HER GRANDSIRE WAS THE MOUNTAIN HARE'

'Thim Mountain Hare colts is no great things,' interrupted Mr. Shute's groom contemptuously. 'I seen a colt once that was one of his stock, and if there was forty men and their wives, and they after him with sticks, he wouldn't lep a sod of turf.'

'Lep is it!' ejaculated the owner in a voice shrill with outrage. 'You may lead that mare out through the counthry, and there isn't a fence in it that she wouldn't go up to it as indepindent as if she was going to her bed, and your honour's ladyship knows that dam well, Miss Knox.'

'You want too much money for her, McCarthy,' returned Miss Sally, with her little air of preternatural wisdom.

'God pardon you, Miss Knox! Sure a lady like you knows well that forty-five pounds is no money for that mare. Forty-five pounds!' He laughed. 'It'd be as good for me to make her a present to the gentleman all out as take three farthings less for her! She's too grand entirely for a poor farmer like me, and if it wasn't for the long weak family I have, I wouldn't part with her under twice the money.'

'Three fine lumps of daughters in America paying his rent for him,' commented Flurry in the background. 'That's the long weak family!'

Bernard dismounted and slapped the mare's ribs approvingly.

'I haven't had such a gallop since I was at Rio,' he said. 'What do you think of her, Miss Knox?' Then, without waiting for an answer, 'I like her. I think I may as well give him the forty-five and have done with it!'

At these ingenuous words I saw a spasm of anguish cross the countenance of McCarthy, easily interpreted as the first pang of a life-long regret that he had not asked twice the money. Flurry Knox put up an eyebrow and winked at me; Mr. Shute's groom turned away for very shame. Sally Knox laughed with the deplorable levity of nineteen.

Thus, with a brevity absolutely scandalous in the eyes of all beholders, the bargain was concluded.

Flurry strolled up to Philippa, observing an elaborate remoteness from Miss Sally and Mr. Shute.

'I believe I'm selling a horse here myself to-day,' he said; 'would you like to have a look at him, Mrs. Yeates?'

'Oh, are you selling, Knox?' struck in Bernard, to whose brain the glory of buying a horse had obviously mounted like new wine; 'I want another, and I know yours are the right sort.'

'Well, as you seem fond of galloping,' said Flurry sardonically, 'this one might suit you.'

'You don't mean the Moonlighter?' said Miss Knox, looking fixedly at him.

'Supposing I did, have you anything to say against him?' replied Flurry.

Decidedly he was in a very bad temper. Miss Sally shrugged her shoulders, and gave a little shred of a laugh, but said no more.

In a comparatively secluded corner of the field we came upon Moonlighter, sidling and fussing, with flickering ears, his tail tightly tucked in and his strong back humped in a manner that boded little good. Even to my untutored eye, he appeared to be an uncommonly good-looking animal, a well-bred grey, with shoulders that raked back as far as the eye could wish, the true Irish jumping hind-quarters, and a showy head and neck; it was obvious that nothing except Michael Hallahane's adroit chucks at his bridle kept him from displaying his jumping powers free of charge. Bernard stared at him in silence; not the pregnant and intimidating silence of the connoisseur, but the tongue-tied muteness of helpless ignorance. His eye for horses had most probably been formed on circus posters, and the advertisements of a well-known embrocation, and Moonlighter approximated in colour and conduct to these models.

'I can see he's a ripping fine horse,' he said at length; 'I think I should like to try him.'

Miss Knox changed countenance perceptibly, and gave a perturbed glance at Flurry. Flurry remained impenetrably unamiable.

'I don't pretend to be a judge of horses,' went on Mr. Shute. 'I dare say I needn't tell *you* that!' with a very engaging smile at Miss Sally; 'but I like this one awfully.'

As even Philippa said afterwards, she would not have given herself away like that over buying a reel of cotton.

'Are you quite sure that he's really the sort of horse you want?' said Miss Knox, with rather more colour in her face than usual; 'he's only four years old, and he's hardly a finished hunter.'

The object of her philanthropy looked rather puzzled. 'What! can't he jump?' he said.

'Is it jump?' exclaimed Michael Hallahane, unable any longer to contain himself; 'is it the horse that jumped five foot of a clothes line in Heffernan's yard, and not a one on his back but himself, and didn't leave so much as the thrack of his hoof on the quilt that was hanging on it!'

'That's about good enough,' said Mr. Shute, with his large friendly laugh; 'what's your price, Knox? I must have the horse that jumped the quilt! I'd like to try him, if you don't mind. There are some jolly looking banks over there.'

'My price is a hundred sovereigns,' said Flurry; 'you can try him if you like.'

'Oh, don't!' cried Sally impulsively; but Bernard's foot was already in the stirrup. 'I call it disgraceful!' I heard her say in a low voice to her kinsman—'you know he can't ride.'

The kinsman permitted himself a malign smile. 'That's his look out,' he said.

Perhaps the unexpected docility with which Moonlighter allowed himself to be manœuvred through the crowd was due to Bernard's thirteen stone; at all events, his progress through a gate into the next field was unexceptionable. Bernard, however, had no idea of encouraging this tranquillity. He had come out to gallop, and without further ceremony he drove his heels into Moonlighter's side, and took the consequences in the shape of a very fine and able buck. How he remained within even visiting distance of the saddle it is impossible to explain; perhaps his early experience in the rigging stood him in good stead in the matter of hanging on by his hands; but, however preserved, he did

remain, and went away down the field at what he himself subsequently described as 'the rate of knots.'

Flurry flung away his cigarette and ran to a point of better observation. We all ran, including Michael Hallahane and various onlookers, and were in time to see Mr. Shute charging the least advantageous spot in a hollow-faced furzy bank. Nothing but the grey horse's extreme activity got the pair safely over; he jumped it on a slant, changed feet in the heart of a furze-bush, and was lost to view. In what relative positions Bernard and his steed alighted was to us a matter of conjecture; when we caught sight of them again, Moonlighter was running away, with his rider still on his back, while the slope of the ground lent wings to his flight.

'That young gentleman will be apt to be killed,' said Michael Hallahane with composure, not to say enjoyment.

'He'll be into the long bog with him pretty soon,' said Flurry, his keen eye tracking the fugitive.

'Oh!—I thought he was off that time!' exclaimed Miss Sally, with a gasp in which consternation and amusement were blended. 'There! He *is* into the bog!'

It did not take us long to arrive at the scene of disaster, to which, as to a dog-fight, other foot-runners were already hurrying, and on our arrival we found things looking remarkably unpleasant for Mr. Shute and Moonlighter. The latter was sunk to his withers in the sheet of black slime into which he had stampeded; the former, submerged to the waist three yards further away in the bog, was trying to drag himself towards firm ground by the aid of tussocks of wiry grass.

'Hit him!' shouted Flurry. 'Hit him! he'll sink if he stops there!'

Mr. Shute turned on his adviser a face streaming with black mud, out of which his brown eyes and white teeth gleamed with undaunted cheerfulness.

'All jolly fine,' he called back; 'if I let go this grass I'll sink too!'

A shout of laughter from the male portion of the spectators sympathetically greeted this announcement, and a dozen equally futile methods of escape were suggested. Among those who had joined us was, fortunately, one of the many boys who pervaded the fair selling halters, and, by means of several of these knotted together, a line of communication was established. Moonlighter, who had fallen into the state of inane stupor in which horses in his plight so often indulge, was roused to activity

by showers of stones and imprecations but faintly chastened by the presence of ladies. Bernard, hanging on to his tail, belaboured him with a cane, and, finally, the reins proving good, the task of towing the victims ashore was achieved.

'He's mine, Knox, you know,' were Mr. Shute's first words as he scrambled to his feet; 'he's the best horse I ever got across —worth twice the money!'

'Faith, he's aisy plased!' remarked a bystander.

'Oh, do go and borrow some dry clothes,' interposed Philippa, practically; 'surely there must be someone——'

BERNARD, HANGING ON TO HIS TAIL, BELABOURED HIM WITH A CANE

'There's a shop in the town where he can strip a peg for 13*s.* 9*d.*,' said Flurry grimly; 'I wouldn't care myself about the clothes you'd borrow here!'

The morning sun shone jovially upon Moonlighter and his rider, caking momently the black bog stuff with which both were coated, and as the group disintegrated, and we turned to go back, every man present was pleasurably aware that the buttons of Mr. Shute's riding breeches had burst at the knee, causing a large triangular hiatus above his gaiter.

'Well,' said Flurry conclusively to me as we retraced our steps, 'I always thought the fellow was a fool, but I never thought he was such a damned fool.'

It seemed an interminable time since breakfast when our party, somewhat shattered by the stirring events of the morning,

found itself gathered in an upstairs room at the Royal Hotel, waiting for a meal that had been ordained some two hours before. The air was charged with the mingled odours of boiling cabbage and frying mutton; we affected to speak of them with disgust, but our souls yearned to them. Female ministrants, with rustling skirts and pounding feet, raced along the passages with trays that were never for us, and opening doors released roaring gusts of conversation, blended with the clatter of knives and forks, and still we starved. Even the ginger-coloured check suit, lately labelled 'The Sandringham. Wonderful value, 16*s.* 9*d.*' in the window of Drumcurran's leading mart, and now displayed upon Mr. Shute's all too lengthy limbs, had lost its power to charm.

'Oh, don't tear that bell quite out by the roots, Bernard,' said his sister, from the heart of a lamentable yawn. 'I dare say it only amuses them when we ring, but it may remind them that we are still alive. Major Yeates, do you or do you not regret the pigs' feet?'

'More than I can express,' I said, turning from the window, where I had been looking down at the endless succession of horses' backs and men's hats, moving in two opposing currents in the street below. 'I dare say if we talk about them for a little we shall feel ill, and that will be better than nothing.'

At this juncture, however, a heavy-laden tray thumped against the door, and our repast was borne into the room by a hot young woman in creaking boots, who hoarsely explained that what kept her was waiting on the potatoes, and that the ould pan that was in it was playing Puck with the beefsteaks.

'Well,' said Miss Shute, as she began to try conclusions between a blunt knife and a bullet-proof mutton chop. 'I have never lived in the country before, but I have always been given to understand that the village inn was one of its chief attractions.' She delicately moved the potato dish so as to cover the traces of a bygone egg, and her glance lingered on the flies that dragged their way across a melting mound of salt butter. 'I like local colour, but I don't care about it on the tablecloth.'

'Well, I'm getting quite anxious about Irish country hotels now,' said Bernard; 'they're getting so civilised and respectable. After all, when you go back to England no one cares a pin to hear that you've been done up to the knocker. That don't amuse them a bit. But all my friends are as pleased as anything when I tell them of the pothouse where I slept in my clothes rather than face the sheets, or how, when I complained to the landlady

next day, she said, "Cock ye up! Wasn't it his Reverence the Dean of Kilcoe had them last!" '

We smiled wanly; what I chiefly felt was respect for any hungry man who could jest in presence of such a meal.

'All this time my hunter hasn't been bought,' said Philippa presently, leaning back in her chair, and abandoning the unequal contest with her beefsteak. 'Who is Bobby Bennett? Will his horse carry a lady?'

Sally Knox looked at me and began to laugh.

'You should ask Major Yeates about Bobby Bennett,' she said.

Confound Miss Sally! It had never seemed worth while to tell Philippa all that story about my doing up Miss Bobby Bennett's hair, and I sank my face in my tumbler of stagnant whisky-and-soda to conceal the colour that suddenly adorned it. Any intelligent man will understand that it was a situation calculated to amuse the ungodly, but without any real fun in it. I explained Miss Bennett as briefly as possible, and at all the more critical points Miss Sally's hazel-green eyes roamed slowly and mercilessly towards me.

'You haven't told Mrs. Yeates that she's one of the greatest horse-copers in the country,' she said, when I had got through somehow; 'she can sell you a very good horse sometimes, and a very bad one too, if she gets the chance.'

'No one will ever explain to me,' said Miss Shute, scanning us all with her dark, half-amused, and wholly sophisticated eyes, 'why horse-coping is more respectable than cheating at cards. I rather respect people who are able to cheat at cards; if everyone did, it would make whist so much more cheerful; but there is no forgiveness for dealing yourself the right card, and there is no condemnation for dealing your neighbour a very wrong horse!'

'Your neighbour is supposed to be able to take care of himself,' said Bernard.

'Well, why doesn't that apply to card-players?' returned his sister; 'are they all in a state of helpless innocence?'

'I'm helplessly innocent,' announced Philippa, 'so I hope Miss Bennett won't deal me a wrong horse.'

'Oh, her mare is one of the right ones,' said Miss Sally; 'she's a lovely jumper, and her manners are the very best.'

The door opened, and Flurry Knox put in his head. 'Bobby Bennett's downstairs,' he said to me mysteriously.

I got up, not without consciousness of Miss Sally's eye, and prepared to follow him. 'You'd better come too, Mrs. Yeates,

to keep an eye on him. Don't let him give her more than thirty, and if he gives that she should return him two sovereigns.' This last injunction was bestowed in a whisper as we descended the stairs.

Miss Bennett was in the crowded yard of the hotel, looking handsome and overdressed, and she greeted me with just that touch of Auld Lang Syne in her manner that I could best have dispensed with. I turned to the business in hand without delay. The brown mare was led forth from the stable and paraded for our benefit; she was one of those inconspicuous, meritorious animals about whom there seems nothing particular to say, and I felt her legs and looked hard at her hocks, and was not much the wiser.

'It's no use my saying she doesn't make a noise,' said Miss Bobby, 'because everyone in the country will tell you she does. You can have a vet. if you like, and that's the only fault he can find with her. But if Mrs. Yeates hasn't hunted before now, I'll guarantee Cruiskeen as just the thing for her. She's really safe and confidential. My little brother Georgie has hunted her—*you* remember Georgie, Major Yeates?—the night of the ball, you know—and he's only eleven. Mr. Knox can tell you what sort she is.'

'Oh, she's a grand mare,' said Mr. Knox, thus appealed to; 'you'd hear her coming three fields off like a German band!'

'And well for you if you could keep within three fields of her!' retorted Miss Bennett. 'At all events, she's not like the hunter you sold Uncle, that used to kick the stars as soon as I put my foot in the stirrup!'

''Twas the size of the foot frightened him,' said Flurry.

'Do you know how Uncle cured him?' said Miss Bennett, turning her back on her adversary; 'he had him tied head and tail across the yard gate, and every man that came in had to get over his back!'

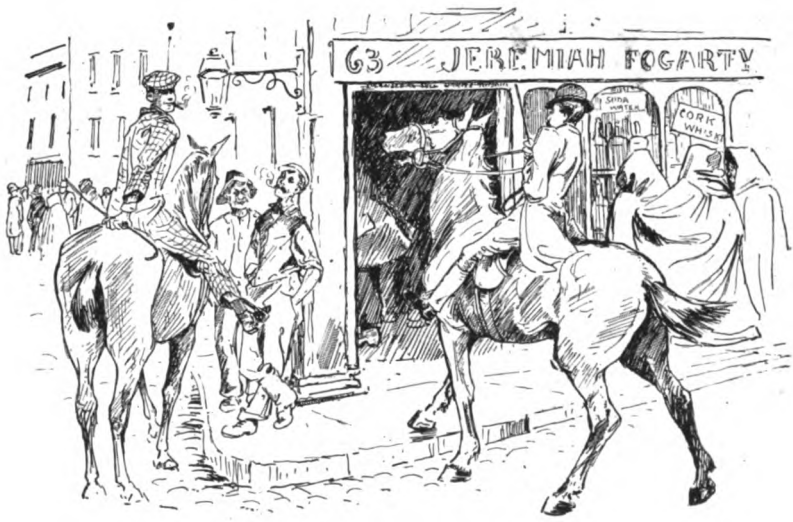
'That's no bad one!' said Flurry.

Philippa looked from one to the other in bewilderment, while the badinage continued, swift and unsmiling, as became two hierarchs of horse-dealing; it went on at intervals for the next ten minutes, and at the end of that time I had bought the mare for thirty pounds. As Miss Bennett said nothing about giving me back two of them, I had not the nerve to suggest it.

After this Flurry and Miss Bennett went away, and were swallowed up in the fair; we returned to our friends upstairs, and began to arrange about getting home. This, among other

difficulties, involved the tracking and capture of the Shutes' groom, and took so long that it necessitated tea. Bernard and I had settled to ride our new purchases home, and the groom was to drive the wagonette—an alteration ardently furthered by Miss Shute. The afternoon was well advanced when Bernard and I struggled through the turmoil of the hotel yard in search of our horses, and, the hotel ostler being nowhere to be found, the Shutes' man saddled our animals for us, and then withdrew, to grapple single-handed with the bays in the calf-house.

'Good business for me, that Knox is sending the grey horse home for me,' remarked Bernard, as his new mare followed him



SHE MOUNTED THE PAVEMENT IN FRONT OF A VERY DISREPUTABLE PUBLIC-HOUSE

tractably out of the stall. 'He'd have been rather a handful in this hole of a place.'

He shoved his way out of the yard in front of me, seemingly quite comfortable and at home upon the descendant of the Mountain Hare, and I followed as closely as drunken carmen and shafts of erratic carts would permit. Cruiskeen evinced a decided tendency to turn to the right on leaving the yard, but she took my leftward tug in good part, and we moved on through the streets of Drumcurran with a dignity that was only impaired by the irrepressible determination of Mr. Shute's new trousers to run up his leg. It was a trifle disappointing that Cruiskeen should carry her nose in the air like a camel, but I set it down to my own bad hands, and to that cause I also imputed her frequent

desire to stop, a desire that appeared to coincide with every fourth or fifth public-house on the line of march. Indeed, at the last corner before we left the town, Miss Bennett's mare and I had a serious difference of opinion, in the course of which she mounted the pavement and remained planted in front of a very disreputable public-house, whose owner had been before me several times for various infringements of the Licensing Acts. Bernard and the corner-boys were of course much pleased; I inwardly resolved to let Miss Bennett know how her groom occupied his time in Drumcurran.

We got out into the calm of the country roads without further incident, and I there discovered that Cruiskeen was possessed of a dromedary swiftness in trotting, that the action was about as comfortable as the dromedary's, and that it was extremely difficult to moderate the pace.

'I say! This is something like going!' said Bernard, cantering hard beside me with slack rein and every appearance of happiness. 'Do you mean to keep it up all the way?'

'You'd better ask this devil,' I replied, hauling on the futile ring snaffle. 'Miss Bennett must have an arm like a prize-fighter. If this is what she calls confidential, I don't want her confidences.'

After another half-mile, during which I cursed Flurry Knox, and registered a vow that Philippa should ride Cruiskeen in a cavalry bit, we reached the cross-roads at which Bernard's way parted from mine. Another difference of opinion between my wife's hunter and me here took place, this time on the subject of parting from our companion, and I experienced that peculiar inward sinking that accompanies the birth of the conviction one has been stuck. There were still some eight miles between me and home, but I had at least the consolation of knowing that the brown mare would easily cover it in forty minutes. But in this also disappointment awaited me. Dropping her head to about the level of her knees, the mare subsided into a walk as slow as that of the slowest cow, and very similar in general style. In this manner I progressed for a further mile, breathing forth, like St. Paul, threatenings and slaughters against Bobby Bennett and all her confederates; and then the idea occurred to me that many really first-class hunters were very poor hacks. I consoled myself with this for a further period, and presently an opportunity for testing it presented itself. The road made a long loop round the flank of a hill, and it was possible to save half a mile or so by getting into the fields. It was a short cut I had often taken on the

Quaker, and it involved nothing more serious than a couple of low stone 'gaps' and an infantine bank. I turned Cruiskeen at the first of these. She was evidently surprised. Being in an excessively bad temper, I beat her in a way that surprised her even more, and she jumped the stone precipitately and with an ease that showed she knew quite well what she was about. I vented some further emotion upon her by the convenient medium of my cane, and galloped her across the field and over the bank, which, as they say in these parts, she 'fled' without putting an iron on it. It was not the right way to jump it, but it was inspiriting, and when she had disposed of the next gap without hesitation my waning confidence in Miss Bennett began to revive. I cantered over the ridge of the hill, and down it towards the cottage near which I was accustomed to get out on to the road again. As I neared my wonted opening in the fence, I saw that it had been filled by a stout pole, well fixed into the bank at each end, but not more than three feet high. Cruiskeen pricked her ears at it with intelligence; I trotted her at it, and gave her a whack.

Ages afterwards there was someone speaking on the edge of a dream that I was dreaming about nothing in particular. I went on dreaming, and was impressed by the shape of a fat jug, mottled white and blue, that intruded itself painfully, and I again heard voices, very urgent and full of effort.

I also made an effort of some kind; I was doing my very best to be good and polite, but I was dreaming in a place that whirred, and was engrossing, and daylight was cold and let in some unknown unpleasantness. For that time the dream got the better of the daylight, and then, *apropos* of nothing, I was standing up in a house with someone's arm round me; the mottled jug was there, so was the unpleasantness, and I was talking with most careful, old-world politeness.

'Sit down now, you're all right,' said Miss Bobby Bennett, who was mopping my face with a handkerchief dipped in the jug.

I perceived that I was asking what had happened.

'She fell over the stick with you,' said Miss Bennett; 'the dirty brute!'

With another great effort I hooked myself on to the march of events, as a truck is taken out of a siding and hooked to a train.

'Oh, the Lord save us!' said a grey-haired woman who held the jug, 'ye're desthroyed entirely, asthore! Oh, glory be to the merciful will of God, me heart lepped across me shesht when I seen him undher the horse!'

'Go out and see if the trap's coming,' said Miss Bennett; 'he should have found the doctor by this.' She stared very closely at my face, and seemed to find it easier to talk in short sentences.

'We must get those cuts looking better before Mrs. Yeates comes.'

After an interval, during which unexpected places in my head ached from the cold water, the desire to be polite and coherent again came upon me.

'I am sure it was not your mare's fault,' I said.

Miss Bennett laughed a very little. I was glad to see her laugh; it had struck me her face was strangely haggard and frightened.

THE GREY-HAIRED WOMAN LAUGHED

'Well, of course, it wasn't poor Cruiskeen's fault,' she said. 'She's nearly home with Mr. Shute by now.'

'Mr. Shute!' I said; 'wasn't he at the fair that day?'

'He was,' answered Miss Bobby, looking at me with very compassionate eyes; 'you and he got on each other's horses by mistake at the hotel, and you got the worst of the exchange!'

'Oh!' I said, without even trying to understand.

'He's here within, your honour's ladyship, Mrs. Yeates, ma'am,' shouted the grey-haired woman at the door; 'don't be unaisy, achudth; he's doing grand. Sure, I'm tellin' Miss Binnitt if she was his wife itself, she couldn't give him betther care!'

The grey-haired woman laughed.

SOME BERKSHIRE TRAINING STABLES

BY MAUD UMFREVILLE CLARKE

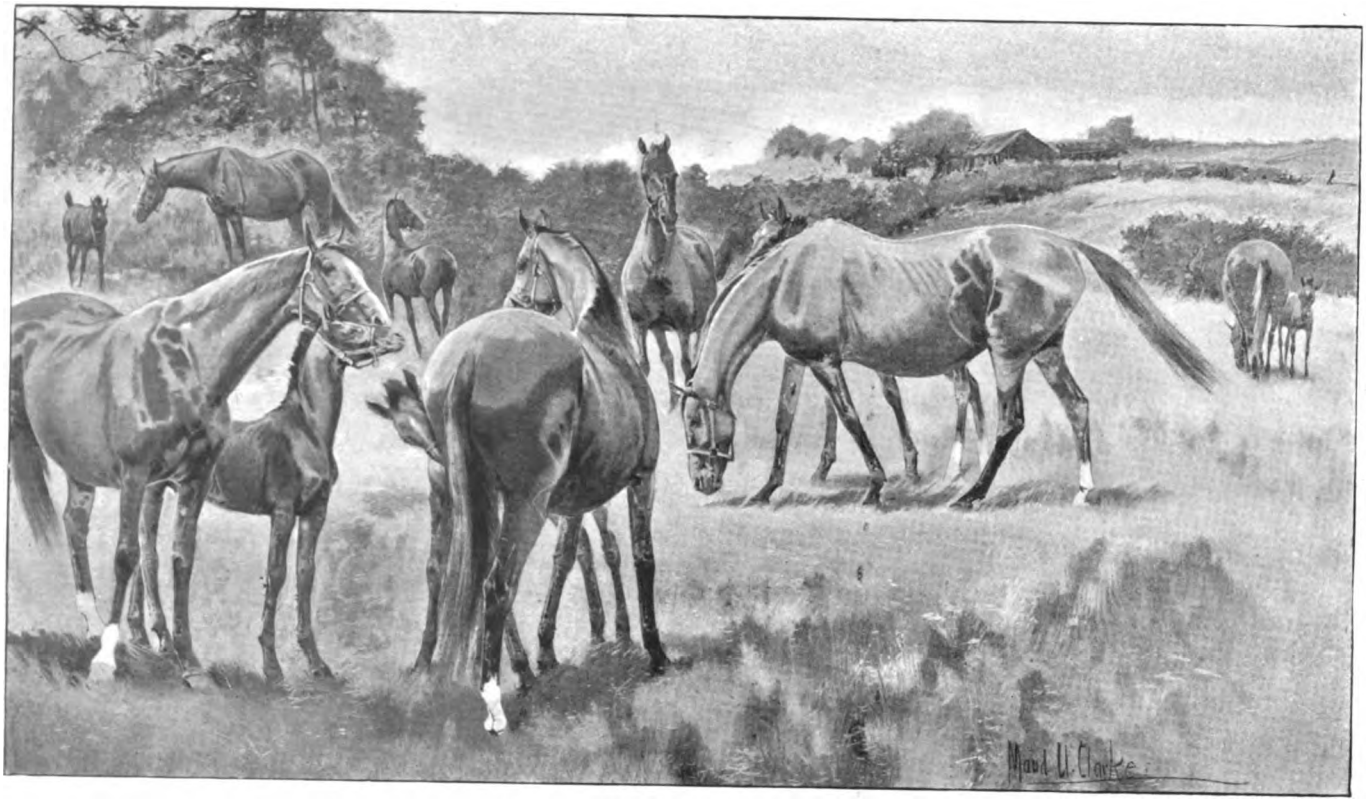
THAT well-known landmark, the White Horse of Berkshire, sprawling its remarkable anatomy on the Down side above the village of Uffington, as seen from the Great Western Railway line, has more than merely archæological interest. Such a badly formed, impossible animal brings to mind the perfection of horseflesh that is located in its neighbourhood; for within a radius of seven miles or less there are half a dozen quarters where opportunity may be found to study the English thoroughbred in all stages of its development. July 1887 was the date of my first acquaintance with Bourton village, Berkshire. The sense of delightful quiet coolness when arriving at Shrivenham station direct from arid, gritty London was the first strong impression; the second, the exceeding fascination and beauty of the scene when first viewing the mares and foals in the grazing meadows adjoining the Bourton boxes. Certainly, from an artist's point of

view, there is no comparison between the advantage of seeing a horse in full sunlight with the accessories of outdoor surroundings over that of ever so roomy a box.

The mares made a charming picture: some moving lazily about in search of the choicest nibbles of sweet grass, others standing under the shade of trees, whisking their long tails in calm content of well being, whilst the foals were running infantile races, with their little doormat tails curled up in excitement. The matrons have a lively way with their aristocratic heels sometimes, but being unshod the casualties go for little.

The boxes were very simply constructed wooden ones, pitched over, roofing and all, with small enclosures before each. The head-man's house, a few sheds, and the straw and hay-ricks comprised the extent of the settlement. It is approached from the highway by a rough piece of grass road of no great length, cutting through the fields, but the grazing land lies farther in, out of reach of the stranger's curious eye. It goes without saying that the formality of introduction had enabled me to study among the mares. Of what they had done during their racing career I knew next to nothing, and looked at them simply with an artist's eye. Among such a good-looking lot it was difficult to make a selection, but my choice fell on Satire, a golden chestnut, with a curious amount of white about her, including four white stockings, but she was a wonderfully good-shaped one. Her chestnut colt, by Muncaster, I painted with the mare, and he went out into the world in the following year as Sting, sold at Doncaster with the Bishopstone yearlings. At stated intervals they were brought into the small enclosure before their box to stand for their portraits, though there is very little standing still in a colt's composition! Little Sister was another very good mare; she was a foal of the Duke of Westminster's breeding, a bay, with beautiful shoulder and quarters—good all over, in fact—with a way of striding her hind feet under her when walking that was very suggestive of galloping possibilities. Hers was also a Muncaster colt—Mount Eagle. One ugly little dark mare I recall, and was rather surprised to learn that she had won several good races in her time. This was the first lesson not to judge by appearances; looking at the great Harpenden one day, and hearing what a poor spirit inhabited that grand form of his, was lesson number two.

There is something wonderfully exhilarating in riding or driving over Down land. The elasticity of the motion is delightful. My first experience of it was driving from Bourton



BROOD HORSES AND FOALS

to Mr. Robert Peck's house at Lambourne; for the chalky road ends abruptly with the rise of the downs about a mile north of Bishopstone, and then you are fairly on the galloping ground —but do not desecrate it with wheel tracks! North again of Ashdown Park, Lord Craven's Wiltshire seat—for the county boundary is passed here—the hard road crops up again, leading from Ashbury to Lambourne. Lambourne House, which was at the time I am writing about tenanted by Mr. Peck, is a solid red brick building, with the curious decoration on its front of the letter 'H' in black; for the property belongs, or did belong then, to the Hippisley family.

Mr. Peck and his two young daughters entertained us that day; 'the boys,' Mr. Percy and Mr. Charles Peck, were at school, a remark which seems harking back a long way, but it was not until 1894 that I found the latter installed at Russley.

There were paintings galore in the house, in rooms, and hall, and stairway, and a portrait of Archer hung in the drawing-room to which my attention was specially drawn; the large-eyed, almost sad face seemed much more to suggest the thinker than the dashing rider.

But the best picture of all was the one seen from the windows looking across the paddocks that lie close to the house, when the string filed by on their way to exercise, the bright colours of the horses in the sunlight backed admirably by the autumn tints of the trees. Mr. Peck saw the value of the whole effect, saying: 'There's a picture for you! Why don't artists take a subject like that, and just give it as it is?' Under the shadow of the trees, in the rear of the procession, was a young horse bucking furiously; his first experience of feeling a weight on his back did not please him, but the scene was a very vigorous and spirited one.

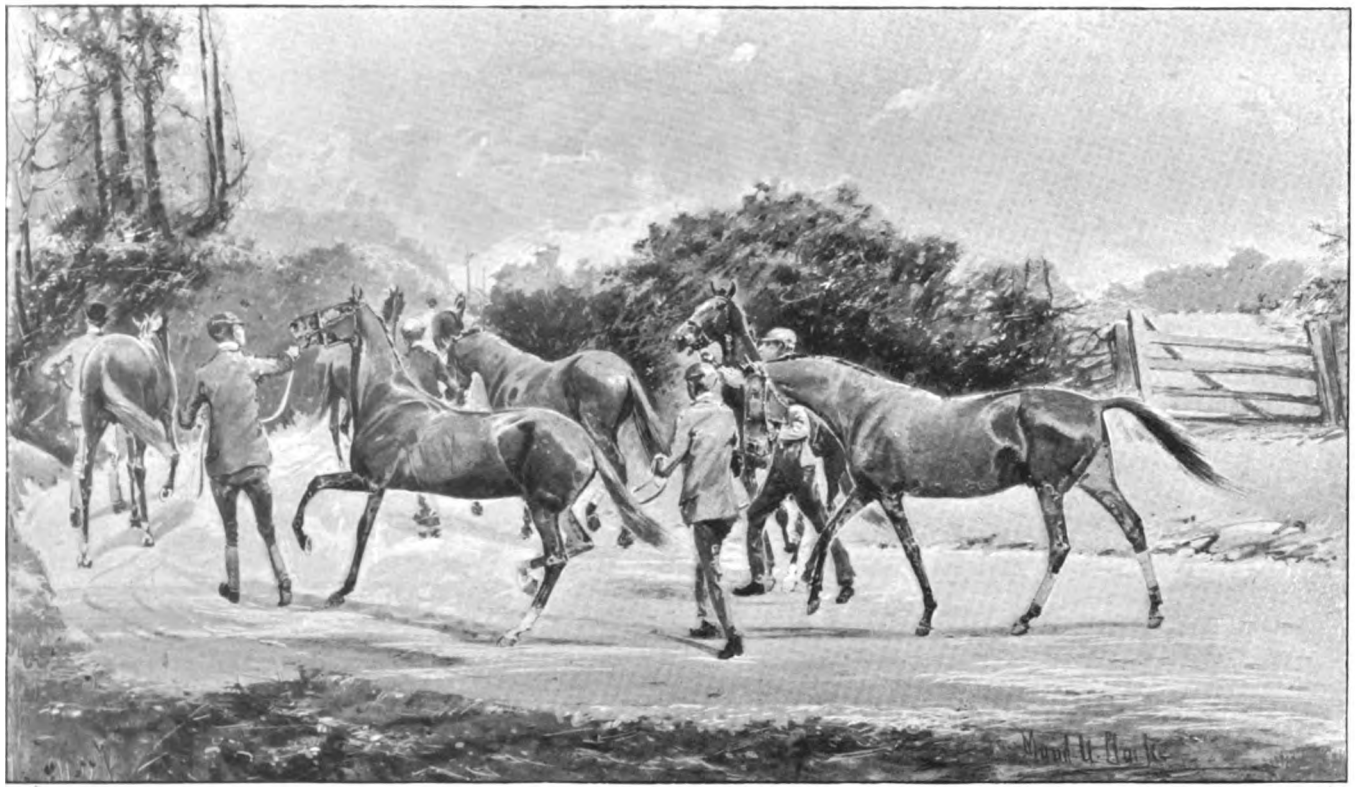
In the autumn of 1888 I painted Muncaster for Mr. Peck at Bishopstone, where the horse stood. Muncaster and his attendant lived practically under one roof—in drawing-room and dining-room so to speak. Amongst various relics I possess is one connected with the horse that only failed by a head to beat Petronel for the Two Thousand of 1880—one of his perfect plates, as neat and round a shoe as ever blacksmith turned out. He was a grand solid chestnut, dark liver, with mane and tail equally dark, by no means running to that ugly yellow colour liver chestnuts often develop, a high crest, and great round quarters that were dappled with gleams of gold through the brown. He had the peculiarity of a short angle from the shoulder-point to the forearm, which placed his forelegs rather in front of him,

giving a slightly 'stiltly' look, which is often characteristic of Muncaster's stock. But the shoulder itself made a big sweep back, placing the riding weight far behind the knees. He was an equable model, though his 'sittings' were of course never prolonged.

Sir Charles Russell, as the Lord Chief Justice then was, used to visit Lambourne House in those days, and came into the box one day whilst I was at work. Muncaster's death, not so very long after this date, was a sudden one. At the Bishopstone forge he plunged up and dropped from heart affection.

Four years later, in 1890, I was again in Bishopstone sketching here and there. At Aldbourne, another village five miles over the Downs, there was quite a distinct community: that of the racing ponies or galloways—miniature thoroughbreds. I went over specially to make the portrait sketch of Mr. Clifford Mellor's little mare Fairyland, a very neat bay, with a typical 'pint-pot' muzzle. Just then she was champion pony, scoring at all the principal pony and galloway meetings, and had beaten her chief rival Dorothy at Hurst Park. Aldbourne is quite an abbreviated village, distinctly rural, with the big church tower coming up in the background behind the long barn roof which then covered the eight boxes, outside of which the surroundings are those of the ordinary farmyard. That same year I gained permission to draw General Byrne's Amphion, stabled at Lambourne in Chandler's care. Many readers will remember that he was very different in colouring from Muncaster, being a sound bright gold, with two white hind stockings. Good-tempered also, he took no offence at my intrusion, but comfortably ate his corn the while. Whenever possible I avoided using that scarecrow-looking object, the sketching-easel; a horse really has every right to resent its introduction.

Bishopstone used once upon a time to be called 'wicked Bishopstone,' why, I do not know; nowadays its characteristics are largely sporting, and include the agricultural process of growing watercress for Covent Garden. Besides its connexion with the racing world there are greyhound kennels, whose occupants are trained on the Down turf. The Bishopstone boxes for the yearlings are no distance from what used to be Muncaster's old quarters; quite a simple block of buildings enclosed by a high, tarred-wood, solid paling, with the grazing meadows lying at the back sloping away southwards towards Bourton. A first-rate 'grand stand' was a certain flat broad stile set in the big thorn fences that screen the meadows on both sides, and



YEARLINGS ON THE ROAD TO THE STATION

from this one could watch the impromptu gallops of the yearlings. A very pretty sight it is to note them playing about, rearing bolt upright, tossing their lithe necks round at each other, attempting more or less playfully to bite each other.

Even the long white Berkshire roads can look interesting at eight o'clock on a June morning when you have the luck to see the young string of yearlings on their march to the station to be boxed for Newmarket. Neither hooded nor sheeted, the variety of colour and form amongst them is not hidden from view as they are led along. They carry nothing but their baby bridles with 'rattles' attached to the bit to play with—bits of loose blunt steel to lip at. So far life has been all 'beer and skittles' for them, and in general their tempers show the good results of uniformly kind treatment. Most docile, gentle creatures they are, and at one time when their company in the meadows was reduced to two little bays, these two would often canter up to me to fraternise, lipping me gently all over in half-assumed curiosity.

The ordeal of boxing upon the occasion when I was spectator went off as happily and quietly as could be wished; for it is an anxious time before the yearlings are safe between the padded partitions of the horsebox. The whole business is such a surprise for them, that even with the precaution taken to deaden the noise of their feet on the hollow sounding box doors with mats, and most careful coaxing into that uncanny looking interior, there is always the possibility of some getting restive, and an awkward slip up and strain may easily result.

The Seven Barrows training quarters, so called from the seven oblong mounds lying on the Down fronting the house, that mark the burial-places of ancient Britons, was once upon a time a very small item in the expanse of turf—merely an isolated barn and a well.

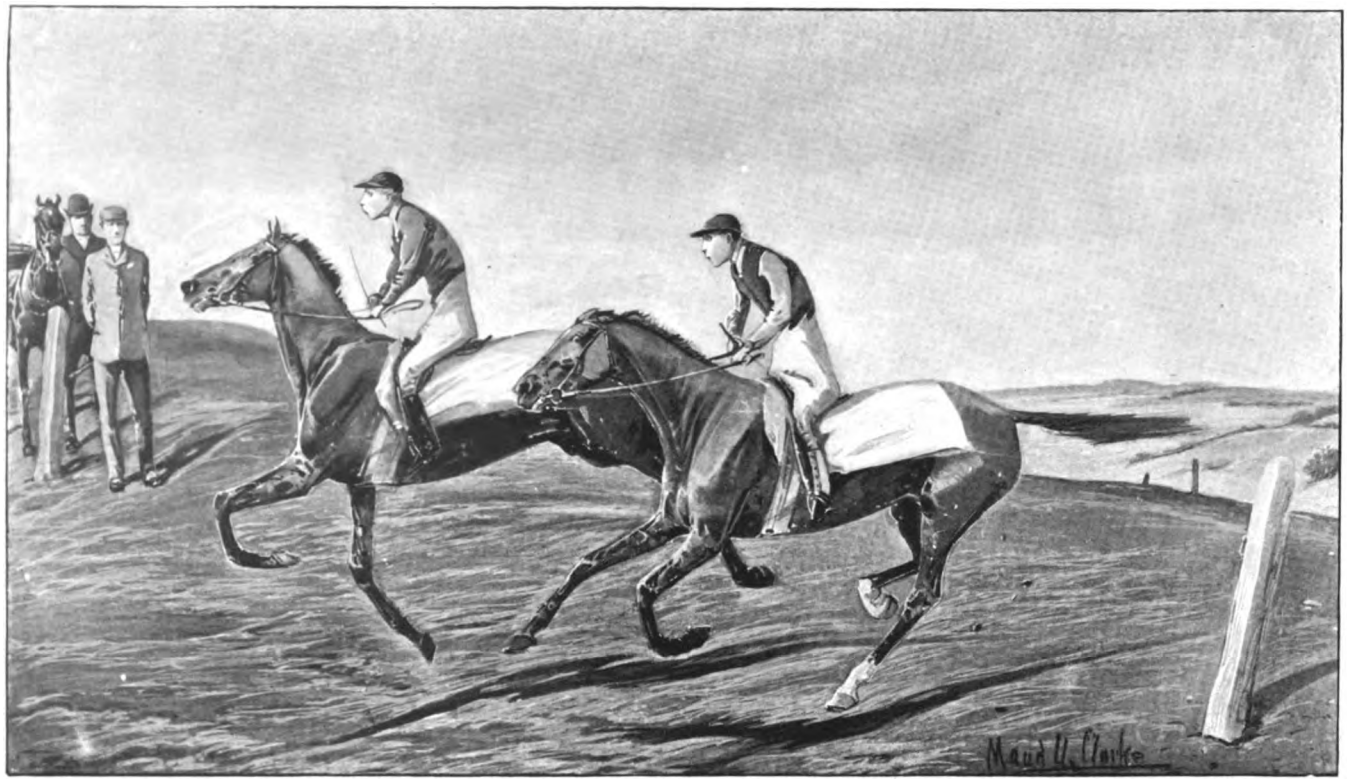
Water supply is limited on the Downs, for which reason the 'dew-ponds' were dug and made the most of. But a well was something superior, and so the barn in time became a sheep farm, and then turned sporting when Brady Nicholson was coursing judge for the Ashdown, Amesbury, and Newmarket meetings. As a training ground for horses, it was first known when George Oates trained for Colonel Towneley, and maintained its name up to the time of Jousiffe, who leased the place for sixteen years and there died. I visited it once in his time, when the portrait of that famous little black horse Bendigo, the hero of the house, hung on the dining-room walls.

But not until 1891, when the estate had passed into Mr. Merry's hands and Mr. Garrett Moore was living there, did I make sketches of the place. The house, with its creeper-covered front, had a most snug look, in the midst of the Down desert all round it. Tall Scotch firs screen the quadrangle of stabling that forms an imposing square or oblong literally at the rear of the house. On entering the enclosure, the lad's quarters lie on the right—stone buildings, with the familiar high-pitch thatched roof; they are up under it, on the first floor, the boxes beneath. At the end of this block is an outlet through a solid white gate, past the firs, to the Downs, in and out of which the string pass to exercise. From this gate the one-story boxes continue the line round the yard, which possesses a turf-set pond, and a young chestnut tree, promising more shade in the future.

One of the notable horses there at that time was Surefoot the evil-tempered. He had made his name, in spite of his failings; but to hear his heels drumming on the sides of his box, and to see his lad with one hand tied up, and duly armed with a stout cane when dressing him, were very suggestive sights and sounds.

The Russley stables I saw first for a brief afternoon's visit in 1887, when Humphries was in possession, and Harpenden and others were in training there; but when I was at Bishopstone in 1890 the place was empty, caretakers living in the cottage adjoining the home farm, gave the only aspect of life to the premises. The big lonely house had a few old portraits then left hanging on the walls to keep watch through the silent days and nights of the Downs—much more silent than days and nights anywhere else, for nothing ever 'passes.' The stables wore that indescribable air of gloom which only empty stables ever can.

How many times the chill air of desolation has fallen on Russley, to be again enlivened at intervals, it would be a little difficult to state, for its site at all events is very old—old enough to have grown legends, and one is, that the beautiful grass avenue, with its fine trees arching overhead, was at one time a coach road. It is hard to believe nowadays, and if ever it was so, this must have been the loneliest spot ever haunted by highwayman. At any rate, many changes came over the place before Russley Park House as it now stands had been evolved by degrees from the original farmhouse of its early history. Another legend goes that there is, or was, an underground passage connecting the cellars of the house with Ashdown Park—a good long burrow it must have been! It is said to have been stopped up in Matthew Dawson's time—1861. He followed King, who,



A TRIAL

training for Baron Rothschild, was the first to bring Russley into fame. Mr. Merry's success with Derby winners is intimately associated with the place, and a line of eight brick boxes, standing at right angles with the house, were his addition to the quarters. When Matthew Dawson left for Newmarket in 1866, James Waugh reigned for five years; in 1871 Mr. Robert Peck took up the lease for twelve years, and during that time many notable names, such as Doncaster, Marie Stuart, and Bend Or, brought fame to the training ground.

Then followed a blank time, the house only occasionally inhabited and the stables left to the rats and cobwebs. But 1894 saw once more a revival, and the July of that year I found the house again wearing a very different aspect with Mr. Charles Peck at the head of affairs. By way of planting his own colours on the acquired territory, he put up seven more boxes, chocolate and white match-boarding, with gay red-striped sunblinds, and galvanised-iron roofing, on the removable plan. I was sketching the house when Mr. Peck strolled up and asked me if I cared to go through the stables with him at 'stable time' presently.

To go from box to box down the rank was a free education on the subject. In a training establishment things are not always 'what they seem.' A horse's clothing is slipped off dexterously for the inspection by the sphinx-faced lad, and one would have judged its coat an illustration of the fine art of polishing, but Mr. Peck passed a hand over its neck and shoulder, that was enough, and there was remonstrance with that imperturbable youth.

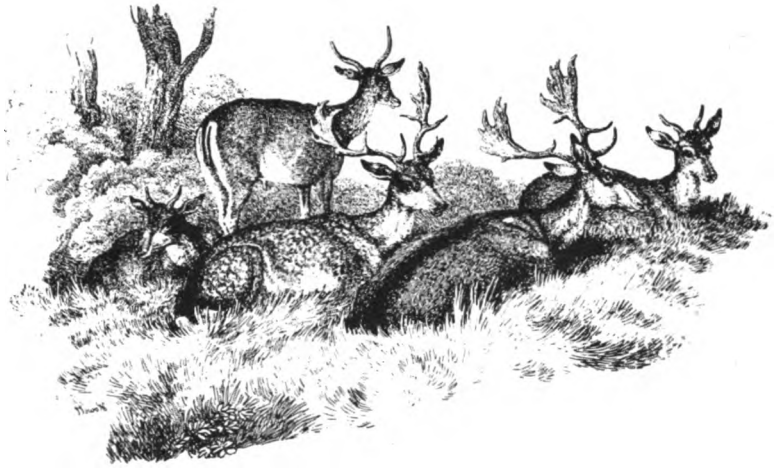
Pausing at another box, he asked, 'What do you think of this one?'

The bay was good enough to look at, certainly, but I did not rise to the occasion as I should have, for this was no other than the crack Son-o'-mine, who was then esteemed a great horse. That evening there was to be a quiet little trial up on the Chain Gallop above Russley—which is quite in a valley by the way—and I was invited to be at the 'post' with the judges.

I used to ride over from Bishopstone on a convenient pony; he was 'common or garden' to a degree, but eminently useful, for he would canter along, supremely indifferent to the rattle of sketching apparatus strapped on his withers, with the equanimity of a cavalry horse. He would stand still and go to sleep on three legs if I wanted to sketch from the saddle, and it is not every four-legged animal one can use as a means of locomotion and a camp-stool alternately.

On this quadruped I joined the group at the finish of the

gallop, where the ground rises considerably between the occasional white posts. Yellow evening sunlight was flooding the Downs, tinging the tops of Russley's trees below, and presently it caught on the two horses a long way off coming towards us--mere dark specks on the green. The distance took from the sense of effort entirely; they seemed very quiet, very methodical in the swing, swing of those long legs. But in curious fashion the scarlet silk on the bay seemed to slide out from the chestnut, and led up the slope. It was a breathless sort of second or two: one can't exactly focus the rapid approach of two solid bodies, with the turf flying up like dead leaves. They appeared to me to make one confused conglomerate at the post, the two impressions flashed so quickly on top of each other, and to say which of them, bay or chestnut, did get his nose past us first, was fortunately not for me to decide!



NOTES

BY 'RAPIER'

MR. GILBERT STANHOPE furnishes me with some very interesting particulars of the race for the Emperor's Cup, the great event of the year to a German cavalry officer. The contest differs totally from racing as we know it here, and is a long-distance race indeed. The military authorities were not slow to take a lesson from their defeat in the now famous ride between Berlin and Vienna, and, recognising that the Austrians owed their victory, not to greater energy, valour or skill in horsemanship, but simply to their larger experience in this particular kind of riding, they immediately took steps to ensure that their own officers should also acquire this experience. Up to that time German cavalry officers had occasionally competed among themselves in long-distance rides for their own amusement; but since then such a ride has been made compulsory once a year for every lieutenant, and even for some of the non-commissioned officers and privates; and with the ride is combined some task of reconnoitring. To further encourage the practice of this art the Emperor offers yearly a handsome silver cup, which, however, must be won twice before it becomes absolutely the property of the victorious competitor. This ride between Berlin and Vienna opened the eyes of the military world to the immense capabilities of the horse, when judiciously managed, and convinced them that in time of war there is no more trustworthy way of obtaining information about the enemy's movements

than by means of wary and resourceful cavalry scouts. Telegraph wires may be cut, balloons and carrier-pigeons fall into the hands of the enemy, but a handful of daring men, trained to the riding of long distances, and practised in the acquiring of that sort of information which is most useful to the general in command, proves simply invaluable.

These long-distance rides call forth the utmost capabilities of both man and beast, and form an excellent training for a cavalry scout, bringing out, as they do, all his powers of judgment, as well as of endurance. He must thoroughly understand his horse, and know how to treat him in sudden emergencies; the loss of a shoe or the discovery of saddle galls must not find him helpless in the absence of regimental farrier and veterinary surgeon. But the first and greatest lesson he has to learn is how to obtain the utmost possible limit of performance from a horse without over-riding him, and this knowledge he can acquire only by reiterated experience. Once over-exhausted the horse will be incapable of further work without a long interval of rest; therefore the rider must know when to spare him. On the other hand, every halt means a loss of minutes that are most precious, and therefore no more rest must be allowed than is absolutely necessary. The rider must know how to distinguish signs of legitimate fatigue from symptoms of dangerous exhaustion; and, as horses differ considerably in the way they behave under stress of trial, a long apprenticeship is necessary to enable him to read the signs aright. It is a very different matter from riding on a course or following hounds. The problem is to cover something like a hundred miles in the shortest possible space of time without disabling the horse; and it is a problem that calls for nice discrimination and judgment, as well as that sympathy between horse and rider that enables the latter to understand the idiosyncrasies of his mount.

But the judicious management of his horse is only one part of the task assigned to the German cavalryman. He has also to bring back intelligence on some specified point, usually with regard to the disposition of the opposing forces. These are represented by troops posted in certain positions, and to disregard their fire puts him out of the running. Then arise opportunities for the exercise of his judgment. Will slight information speedily brought prove more valuable than fuller details necessarily

arriving later? He has to learn quickness of decision and self-reliance. To increase his difficulties the compulsory rides are purposely ordered at different seasons of the year, so that ice-bound rivers and roads deep in snow are sometimes added to the obstacles that have to be overcome. The Emperor's Cup race is entirely a voluntary one, and, being open to officers of all grades, the settlement of the conditions is no easy task. Sometimes the starting-point and the goal are the same for all competitors; at other times each officer starts from his own garrison town to ride to some appointed spot. The reconnoitring tasks assigned to competitors of such varied ranks necessarily vary too, and are arranged in groups; for from a regimental commander, for instance, would naturally be expected a better knowledge as to what facts were of strategical importance, a keener insight into the enemy's tactics, and a clearer idea of the object in view, than from a young lieutenant. The work of the judges presents very severe difficulties. Not only have they to take into consideration the speed of the performance and the condition of rider and steed on their arrival at the goal, but also the value of the information brought and the amount of judgment and intelligence displayed by each competitor. Experts in every branch give their opinion; a commission of superior officers carefully weighs the merits of the rival performances; the one name at length fixed upon is sent to the Emperor for ratification, and he is a proud man to whom is awarded the right to keep for a year on his table the much-coveted Emperor's Cup.

In searching the lists of two-year-olds for animals that are specially well named it almost inevitably happens that one misses a certain number—some of the best names may not strike one at first sight, and then, again, there are very neat names that require an explanatory hint. I suppose the happy efforts this year are about up to the average, but some are more exasperatingly foolish than usual. Imagine the mental attitude of a man who had a foal by Orme—Can't to name, and was not ashamed to write to Messrs. Weatherby and say that he had called it 'Ormecant'! I do not note anything very good among the 'A's,' but, though it does not sound like an Oaks winner, 'Bathing Woman' is to the point for a daughter of Tyrant and Dip. 'Creuzot' is the sort of name to which I just now referred. Not every one knows that this is the great French naval *depôt*, a

storage place for arms, but when this is understood, the name is to the purpose for a son of Carbine and Normania. A few fairly successful names are 'Corona Corona' (Queen's Birthday—Queen of the Florin), 'Duckgun' (Carbine—The Smew), Entremêt (Isinglass—Sweet Sauce), and 'Flashpoint' (Sheen—Allumeuse). 'Garrison Hack' (Son of a Gun—Dowerless) would be capital if the animal were a filly. 'Glasgow' is good for a son of Isinglass and Be Cannie—one has the last syllable of the sire's name and the fact that people are supposed to be specially cannie in that city—and 'Glass Eye' fits a daughter of Isinglass and Glare the more completely as the filly so called has only one.

Combinations of the names of sires and dams are good when they mean anything, bad when they mean nothing; examples being 'Gold Jug' (Juggler—Gold Crest) and 'Glow Kendal' (Kendal—Afterglow). One knows what a gold jug is, but what does 'Glow Kendal' mean? 'Gun Metal' (Carbine—Metallic) is almost too obvious to merit praise. 'Highland Reel' (Tanzmeister—Special Scotch) is good, as is 'High Note' (Suspender—Rondo); it is conventional bad art, but the singer *will* show off by hanging on to the penultimate high note of the rondo. 'Hurry On' is a quite admissible combination for Amphion and Hurry. 'Kaaba,' a daughter of Suspender and Mecca, will be understood as worthy of inclusion when it is remembered that this is the place where Mahomet's coffin is supposed to be suspended between earth and heaven. 'Lacrosse' is suitable for the Ladas—Lucy Cross filly, and—though four words to a name are a bit awkward—there was a natural temptation to call a daughter of Morion and Cereza 'Little Red Riding Hood.' 'Manse' does well for the Best Man—Scotch Agnes filly, and there is a certain amount of imagination in 'Open Tart' for a daughter of Bread Knife and Lais. 'Pleasure Boat' (Crafton—La Joie), 'Prison Fare' (Prisoner—Fair Vestal), and 'Shilling Fare' (Chittabob—Fair Slave) are not, in the circumstances, bad sort of puns. 'Poltroon' does well enough for the White Feather—Compromise colt, and there is point in 'Richmond Park' for a son of Sheen and Reservation. 'Vulpio' (Cur*io*—*Vulp*ecula) would be good if such a word as 'Vulpio' were found in the Latin dictionary, only it is not. Finally, praise may be given to 'Water-Wraith' (Sorcerer—Dewdrop), 'Whin Bush' (Common—Needles), and 'Windsor Chimes' (Queen's Birthday—Peal of Bells).

As a social function the Grand Military was as brilliantly successful as ever. Even on an Eclipse Stakes day I do not think there is so big a crowd as that which assembles at the soldiers' meeting, though this is natural, as many others besides members are admitted to the club on the occasion. The sport was, on the whole, of about average interest. In spite of all the races she has won, Lambay with thirteen stone on her back did not strike everyone as having a very brilliant chance in the Gold Cup, but Mr. Charles Cunningham, an admirable judge, was very confident, and the result proved that he was right. Boreen has, I fancy, the making of a very nice horse, but he is only half a horse at present. They breed good animals in Ireland, and they teach them to jump; but they do not seem to groom them at all—I am not talking of such a stable as that which Mr. Lushington manages—and they certainly neglect to 'do' them well generally. With plenty of good old oats and a due amount of strapping the imported Irish horse improves vastly, and I expect to see many races won by Boreen. Captain Eustace Loder with a little luck might have scored thrice, with Covert Hack, Dargai and Sitric, but Major Hardinge was his evil genius. The vagaries of Solent Belle drove Sitric out of the course, and it was the same rider's inability to keep Scotland Yard straight that caused the downfall of Dargai and the fracture of Major Hughes-Onslow's collar-bone. Boreen had all the steel taken out of him in the Cup, and made only a feeble response on the second day to the calls of Mr. Reginald Ward, who won three races as against six last year. Captain Murray-Thriepland is so bold and skilful a rider, and sticks to the game with such enthusiasm, that his victory on Lambay was extremely popular. I did not see how he got knocked over on Lambay in the Handicap, but obviously he did not contribute to the accident. There was an unusual amount of disaster, with Mr. de Crespigny's broken arm, Major Hughes-Onslow's collar-bone, Sir Edward Stracey's very ugly fall, and the nasty shaking that Captain Murray-Thriepland, Messrs. Algernon Lawson and Patrick Cox received; but the only effect these tumbles had on them seemed to be to create regret that they could not be up and at it again in the next race.

There is no possibility of obtaining statistics of the number of men who hunt year by year, but I am inclined to believe that more men have followed hounds during the season that is just

drawing to a close than ever before. Some of the fields in the shires have looked like regiments of (very irregular) cavalry, and the long lists of fixtures published monthly in the sporting papers do not, of course, convey an adequate idea of the number of packs that are in existence, as many Masters who hunt near large towns never advertise, and indeed are inclined to keep their meets as dark as possible, not desiring to be overwhelmed by a host of strangers. It would be exceedingly interesting to know approximately how many men hunt in the course of the week and the number of foxes killed, but such figures are really unobtainable. I have seen vague calculations based on quite inadequate foundations, and have not the time myself to endeavour to go into the matter with care.

A somewhat kindred question is the number of partridges, pheasants, &c. killed in the course of the season. Multitudes of men who have shootings never send a head of game to market, and yet in every town shops are numerous, and the dealers in game never seem troubled to keep up the supply. Has any moderately sensible opponent of the Game Laws ever tried to realise what England would be like without sport? It is not only the question of food supply, but the thousands of men who make their livings by ministering to the necessities of sportsmen—keepers and labourers employed about estates, gunsmiths, cartridge-makers, manufacturers of shooting appliances of all sorts; saddlers, corn-dealers, &c., in the case of hunting; rod-makers and the rest where fishing is in question. The carriage of game and of the men who shoot it, and the extent to which the railway companies, fly proprietors, hotel keepers, and others benefit by the conveyance and expenditure of men who would not travel and live away from their homes if they did not go to hunt, shoot, or fish, have also to be taken into consideration.

Flat racing will have begun before these Notes appear, and we shall be wondering whether the winner of the Brocklesby is a Donovan or a Volcano, a Bard or an April Fool, whether the Molyneux Stakes and Sefton Park Plate have fallen to a Champ de Mars and a Cyllene, or to some creature that will later on be unsuccessfully carrying 6 st. in Nurseries. Also, for months to

come we shall be wasting time by arguing about the chances Holocauste has of winning the Derby—I say wasting time, because how can one possibly gauge the relative form of Flying Fox, St. Gris, and the grey son of Le Sancy? I do not suppose that our three-year-olds—those, at any rate, that we have seen, and there are always grave doubts about the dark ones—are anything like good horses; but are the French? I find people who have a rooted conviction that Holocauste is certain to win, and he may do so; but they can have nothing except fancy and prejudice on which to base their opinions. There cannot by any possibility be any sort of 'line.' The question of the jockey is far from unimportant also. Who is likely to ride Holocauste? For acquaintance with the Derby course is an enormous point in favour of a rider, and lack of acquaintance with it a heavy handicap against. A strange jockey who did not know Epsom would be at a great disadvantage.

The new Board of Control charged with the duty of arranging all the details in connexion with the test matches against the Australians next summer have at last published the result of their deliberations. Five test matches instead of three, as heretofore, are to be played; but this is the length to which the concessions to the Australians go. Our visitors on each occasion receive half the gross receipts of the 'gate,' and, apart from any other consideration, it is quite obvious why they were desirous of playing each match to a finish, as is the custom in Australia. In Rome, however, it is necessary to do as the Romans do, and the Board of Control have acted wisely in limiting the matches to three days apiece. The interests of county cricket would obviously be much interfered with were the games to extend over four, five, or even six days; and county cricket already suffers somewhat when an Australian eleven is in this country. But the Board of Control had probably a stronger reason than a desire not to upset county fixtures in adhering to the English custom of a three-day match. The practice of 'playing to a finish' is not so sportsmanlike a proceeding as the title would suggest. It puts a premium on waiting tactics and eliminates dash from the game. Whatever else it is, it is certainly 'un-English.' There is always a desire in all parts of the country to see the Australians play, but it is doubtful whether large crowds would constantly assemble to watch Australian batsmen

score at the rate of twenty-five or thirty runs an hour and stay to witness the survival of the fittest. This practice, when adopted some years ago by the Nottinghamshire men, emptied the Trent Bridge ground, and the abstention of the public was indicative of a healthy English spirit. The bat, Mr. A. G. Steel reminds us, was given us to strike the ball with. It is most gratifying to learn that professionals who play for England in these matches will receive twenty pounds apiece per match, instead of ten pounds as formerly. Some of us could have wished that they would get even more than this, especially when it is remembered that the individual share of the men playing against them will probably be nearer a hundred pounds than fifty.

I know a vast deal too much about betting to advise any amateurs ever to bet. In the long run—not seldom in the very short run—the odds, and the innumerable accidents of racing, will tell heavily against the shrewdest and best informed of 'backers.' This is the deliberate and decided opinion of one who has had altogether exceptionally favourable opportunities of acquiring special knowledge. I have been derided for quoting Fred Archer's dictum to me that 'backing horses is a poor game;' but if superficial critics have meant to infer that money is made by some 'professional backers' and others who arrange and carry out tricks and swindles, my reply is that even these men frequently over-reach themselves, and as a rule ultimately come to grief. At the same time I read with much pleasure the decision of the highest tribunal, the House of Lords, which has upset the contentions, supported by the egregious Mr. John Hawke and his Anti-Gambling League, that a racecourse is a betting office. Every moderately sensible human being must have understood that when the late Lord Cockburn introduced a Bill to destroy 'list houses,' and began by saying that 'a new form of betting had of late sprung up,' he was not aiming at an old form of betting that had been carried on for generations. Law is law, and common sense is common sense, little as Mr. John Hawke may suspect it. Betting as now carried on—the beguilement of the silly clerk and the thick-headed working-man—does grave mischief, and the idiotic proceedings of the Anti-Gambling League have considerably increased its gravity.

THE
BADMINTON MAGAZINE
May 1899

THE PRETENDERS

BY W. B. MAXWELL

THOSE who hunt regularly in the South of England are well acquainted with the class of spring visitors—distinguished strangers who make their appearance with the violets and the butterflies, and who, when the game is over for the year in the more northern centres of sport, are pleased to snatch a few days' entertainment of a rustic and second-class order. These harbingers of spring, with their fine horses and fine clothes and finest of fine manners, are ever affable, with that courteous tolerance of princes joining in the amusements of peasants, and determined to make the best of everything; but it cannot be denied that their presence is at times oppressive to the poor natives.

It was a lawn meet, on the last day of the season, in a southern country, and such a visitor had just arrived upon the scene. He was a tall young man with grey eyes, a long, well-cut nose, and a slight auburn moustache. He was riding a dark brown horse—a seventeen-hands thoroughbred—with a noble little head, an undocked tail, and one white stocking on his near foreleg. A second horseman followed at a respectful distance, mounted upon a very dark chestnut, also with a noble little head, undocked tail, &c., as splendid an animal as the brown; and, as the man drew up to his master's side, people on horseback,

people on foot, and people on wheels began to ask each other who the distinguished stranger might be.

Somebody the man must be. He looked like Lord Mount Dreadful, of the Royal Horse Guards Blue. You know. The man who sailed his yacht 'Dauntless' backwards and forwards through the Dardanelles, flying an insulting message to the Sultan; the man who caused the trouble with that Austrian archduchess, and who walked through Hungary in the garb of a pedlar, after fighting that famous duel at Buda-Pesth; the millionaire Guardsman who, at his own expense, set a yeomanry regiment in the field once when war seemed imminent; he who made the foolish hundred thousand pounds wager that he would ride his horse Buonaparte (the Grand National winner) up and down the great marble staircase, from hall to garrets, of Mount Dreadful Castle, and *won it*; the beloved of the fair sex, the envied of the other, the handsome, the lucky, the wealthy, the devil-may-care, and the preposterous hero of a hundred legends.

He looked all this, and he was—*nobody*. Nobody at all. Think of it! Not even the Honourable Jack or the Honourable Bob; not even a Mount Dreadful's forty-fifth cousin. Bountiful Nature had somehow blundered; had modelled this young man on Mount Dreadful lines; moulded him in the perfection of form of the salt of the earth, and thrown him on the world, ready at every point to take his place among the elect, but had omitted the twenty thousand per annum necessary to the situation. Naked and shivering, as it were, without a single change of purple and fine linen in his baby wardrobe, he had set himself to carry out Nature's obvious intentions somehow or other.

'He is staying at the Bell at Littleford,' somebody was saying. 'A fellow told me his name is Peignton.'

Quick of eye, if slow of brain, the natives were studiously observing the newcomer. He had stopped the stag-like walk of his beautiful brown well outside the fringe of horsemen who were gathered about Master, hounds and refreshments. He was wearing a silk hat, somewhat low in the crown and rather broad of brim, a long fawn-coloured coat with a velvet collar, white breeches and tops, creamy silken scarf, pearl pin, antelope gloves: and he carried a cloudy cane crop, with one silver band near the handle, another silver band a little further down the stick, and the space between wrapped in leather. There can be nothing in such trivial details to astound the rustic squires or cause the spirit of the young rustic fops to quail. No and yes. There are plenty of silk hats about; but this hat is somehow different, and,

maybe, tends to give the home toppers a quaint and foolish air, befitting them to the shelves of a well-known hat-maker's museum. Silver is hardly, nowadays, a precious metal; but that second band is alone in the field, and seems to have a subtle meaning—to convey a message of a new mode, perhaps already universal in the Midlands. One clean bred horse need not set the world chattering—even down South. But two, exactly similar! Does not such similarity imply unlimited means and critical judgment, an owner firm as rock in his equine ideal and determined at all cost to realise it? Does it not flash before the dullest mind the stately stable *somewhere*, with many another of the same grand stamp pawing the rubber tiles or licking the porcelain wall therein? And the second horseman? Spare, and thin, and light, but obviously riding the same length as his master, so that there need be no fumbling with leathers in changing! Silk hat, white tie, black coat, dark breeches, and long black jacks, the self-same whip, bands and all—a veritable lord of underlings who dreams not of tradesmen inferior in caste to those of his employer.

See, the stranger is peeling! The morning air has been fresh, and that fawn-coloured coat is but an outer garment. When it is removed, will he show pink or black? Pink, assuredly, garnished with the buttons of some far-famed hunt! No. *Another* fawn coat, lighter in tint, and probably also lighter in material, but without a velvet collar. A man riding round him behind wonders why there is no velvet, but immediately feels that velvet would be incorrect; while observers on all sides understand that the absence of the pink should have been expected. Such a one as this, all pride and reserve at heart, in spite of the courtly manner of the spring visitor, would not deign to sport his red coat outside his own domains. The topcoat is folded and bestowed within a strap, which the second horseman is now buckling about his waist, and whence it may safely hang—sole sign of bondage, to tell the uninitiated that the black-coated gentleman is not the owner of 'half a servile shire.'

A long light coat, fitting well to the waist when buttoned, but just now disclosing a delicate buff waistcoat, which is either made of some choice skin or of a choicer cloth to represent it! These last items are duly noted, together with the gold hat-guard, hanging loose down the back in order to allow freedom in bowing to the ladies at the meet. The second horseman reins back respectfully, and his master looks round at the assembled company for the first time. He looks; and then, in a leisurely

manner, he fastens the hat-guard to the back of his hat; and there is no one present who observes and cannot read the inner significance of this slight action—'There is nobody here that I know, or with whom it is probable that I shall wish to become acquainted.'

It is the last touch to the picture, and it may be supposed that the heart goes out of the local *showman* as he realises the enthralling effect it has produced on the local young ladies.

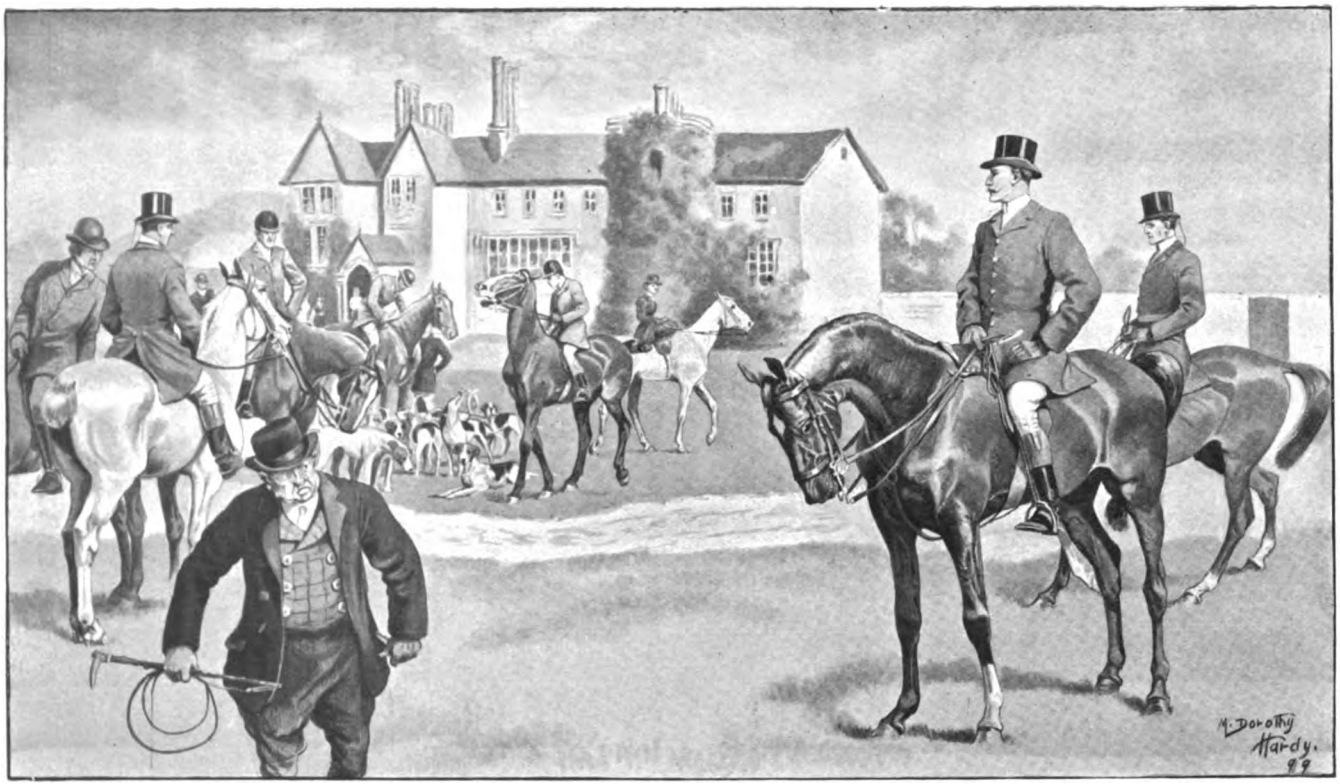
And now, as the local newspaper puts it, 'hounds move off, after partaking of this good staunch sportsman's splendid hospitality.' Skirting the dry moat of the house, through an iron gate, round which a mob of foot people are clustered, the cavalcade bobs and jogs away to seek 'one of those good foxes for which Squire Budsworth is justly famous' (ibid) in the ample copses that fringe the bottom of the park, half a mile away. Good, clean turf for the young, equine and human, to frolic and squeal over; heads up, heads down, and heels flashing high in the sunlight, in the kick-up of sheer exuberance, as we gallop after the bobbing redcoats ahead. Then 'gently, gently, steady now,' in the block at a second iron gate. 'No, no. Never let out in his life—but—thank you, thank you!' and then we can go free again on the firm slope of the outer park pastures.

Mr. Peignton has only permitted his striding brown to saunter after the gay throng. He is lighting a cigarette, and, in point of fact, not at all afraid of being left, now or hereafter, he prefers to keep out of the crowd.

Possibly by chance, or possibly by subtle calculation of time and distance, for the light grey eye is keen as that of the soaring eagle, he is enabled at the second iron railings to hold the gate for a young lady who has come round from the stable-yard just as the master gave the signal to leave the refreshments and get to work.

'Thanks, so much,' says the young lady. Only a tall girl on a hog-maned, lively little grey, but to Mr. Peignton's quick eye at once, and to others when you had time to look at her, *different* from the rest of the field. Undoubtedly as completely of another stamp and pattern as he himself.

At the bottom of the slope there was a narrow gravel path, a short cut through the park to pious villagers bound for church on sabbath morns. On this side of the path a little trickling brook, in size a large ditch, but in character and state a brook, since it contained good running water, collected from the nearest hill and



HIS MASTER LOOKS ROUND AT THE ASSEMBLED COMPANY FOR THE FIRST TIME

busily babbling on to feed the nearest river; on this side again three thick black rails, bound with hoop iron here and there, and well clamped home to the honest stakes which carried them. As the natural lie of the park land was, say, three feet higher than the gravel path, which again was a little more than three feet above the pebbly bed of the brook, it may safely be said that she would be a clever cow who climbed into Squire Budsworth's park from the outer pastures.

There was a gate and cart track over a brick bridge. By this bridge most of the company had passed, and were now assembled in the marshy meadows beyond. A farm hand at the gate was 'shooing' the cattle back to their invaded territory, while he kept the gate open for the mounted quality; the *different* young lady was on the bridge; and the huntsman had just disappeared after his hounds over the rotten bank of the copse as Mr. Peignton came down the slope towards the barrier at the bottom.

His cigarette was well alight, and he was cantering easily, with his whip hand resting on his right thigh. The big brown horse was reaching at his bit, rolling his aristocratic-looking head a little from side to side in a careless fashion, with a downward and now an upward stretch of his beautiful neck and a fine switch of his full black tail. There was a slight commotion among the spectators below, for it really seemed that, with the sun full in their eyes, horse and rider were not aware of the black rails, glittering water, gravel path, or anything else, right in their track. One does not like to see a visitor make a mistake, and if, although he afterwards swore he did not, the local doctor did sing out in stentorian tones, 'Look ahead, sir, look ahead!' it was most obviously a disinterested kindness, and nothing to be ashamed of.

But the warning was not needed. Doubtless, in spite of the appearance of casual inattention, Mr. Peignton was, all unnoticed, practising that highest form of art which conceals itself, the combined excellence of cross-country and show-ring riding which is given to so few. Doubtless the idle hand had got to work, the imperceptible but steady increase of speed had been all worked out to a nicety, as, without falter or swerve, or effort, or jerk, Mr. Peignton simply galloped on into the field in which the ruck had gathered.

'Oo, Oo! That *were* a beauty!' cried the man at the gate, and he let two young heifers slip through his fingers in his excitement.

Quite oblivious of the little knot of pedestrians which had

gathered round the marks of his landing place, well cut in the soft turf on the far side of the gravel path, Mr. Peignton modestly drew rein at a slight distance from the crowd, and peacefully puffed away at his unfinished cigarette.

Now I would not for one moment convey the offensive and injurious idea that the bulk of the southern gentlemen assembled would have turned tail at the composite obstacle which I have so carefully described if hounds were running. Certainly not: but there would have been perhaps the tap on the top of the hat to keep it secure, the taking of your animal hard by the head, dig, dig of your spurs, and may be a wallop behind with your crop to let him know that you mean business, and the grim set look on the face proper to a big effort. Then would have come the rise and the drop, a stagger, perhaps, on the gravel, and a deep drawn grunt or two,—no more. Anyhow, the job would have been done.

But then you know, gratuitously, in cold blood, hounds barely into covert, without even partaking of the splendid hospitality. In this light the thing looked bigger than it was. In fact, when you come to analyse the phenomenon, it really was nothing at all. Give the rails three feet six inches: I suppose you can do *that*? Allow six feet for the ditch, and four, at the *outside*, for the path and all the etceteras, and the only thing left worth chattering about is the drop of six feet six inches all told. Now put yourself, in imagination, on a great striding thoroughbred devil of seventeen hands or so and set him going. If—*if* he jumps at all, if he merely lifts as he goes; at the pace he *must* land well away on the grass. One might defy him to land shorter if he could. He couldn't do it. Not to win a thousand pounds.

There only remains the manner. The thing itself was admittedly nothing (the doctor owned that on reflection), but this new-fangled, cigarette-smoking trick, this yawing, lurching, lolloping manner of cantering over your fences was—there is no other word for it—oppressive.

I have been compelled to 'dwell' at that which Mr. Peignton took so lightly, because really there was nothing else of importance done that day. As so often happens in the bland spring air, when the sulphur butterfly hovers about the wood violets and the voice of the nesting birds is all that speaks in covert, and the bland spring visitor is out and about to see how we do things down there, there was no scent, there were no foxes, there was not anything at all worth anything at all.

'Oh, yes, I shall be off to-morrow,' the young lady on the grey was telling Mr. Peignton. 'I've been here quite long enough.'

'Seen all there is to be seen?' said Mr. Peignton.

'Yes, quite,' said the young lady, meaningly. 'I came for dances and things four days ago; and—I know I oughtn't to say it—it *seems* four *years*.'

Mr. Peignton smiled.

How had they come to be talking together in this confidential way? I suppose he had held a second and a third and perhaps a fourth gate for her, and then, in an easy, gracious, well-bred manner she had herself broken the ice. After all, that sort of thing commits you to nothing. Of course the man can't start the ice breaking. Or did it begin by a kind of mutual attraction, like to like, and so forth? Have you ever noticed two freemasons—quite strangers—thrown together in some hotel smoking-room and dropping into chat? They do it so easily. Well, looking round the field, it really seemed something like the invisible bond of freemasonry in this case.

'I am at the Budsworths', the place where the meet was,' said the young lady.

'A pleasant little place,' said Mr. Peignton. 'Looked quite picturesque.' *Little* place! The show mansion for three miles round. What would Mr. Budsworth say if he heard that? The doctor's wife, pushing by them up the muddy lane, wondered what they would call a *big* place.

She was a large lady—the doctor's wife—keen and resolute in the pursuit, but one little plait of her sandy hair had broken from the pack and rioted loose in the breeze, which gave her a lamentable appearance.

Mr. Peignton glanced at his companion, appreciating all the difference. Well-set bowler, with ribbed silk binding, heavy dark hair, almost black, but trim and firm as a new plashed hedge, not much colour in the face, but fine eyes; a full, large mouth and small white teeth. A pretty and attractive, and a *tall* girl. Mr. Peignton, noting the long stretch from hip-bone to knee-cap of the right leg, put her down as five nine to ten, in her silk stockings. You have to work from the thigh-bone in estimating what a mounted lady stands when she gets down, and Mr. Peignton was rarely wrong by more than an inch. Creamy scarf, stuck through with a large white pearl; slate-grey skirt and coat, with 'self-coloured' velvet collar; delicate buff waistcoat similar to his own; grey doeskin gloves and double-banded crop—Mr. Peignton passed the whole thing as absolutely correct.

Then the doctor squashed and squelched by on the other side. He was riding a raw-boned, naked-looking animal, without breast-

plate or noseband. His thick calves were bulging over his short brown tops; his preposterously weather-beaten red coat had two ludicrously short tails which tucked in under his gross cord breeches. He carried a murderous crop, all nails and studs, with a sort of boa-constrictor thong; and, in spite of the orthodoxy of pink and topper, a matter of principle with the good man, he looked as pitiably and completely unlike the typical flier of a smart country as do those sawdusty sportsmen who ride out into a circus arena to aid some mimic pageant of the chase.

Certainly the young lady on the grey was aware of all this, as she looked shrewdly at her fawn-clad companion and fell to smiling again.

How could the poor girl know that what rode by her side was not the real thing, but a mocking phantom, a splendid fraud, a glorious pretender? For you are to understand that Mr. Peignton not only *looked* the part, he *played* it to perfection. He invited scrutiny; he was prepared for the severest examination. No lady certainly, and not one man in a thousand, would detect the emptiness behind the noble façade, and then it would be by chance—a stray shot going home and exploding and bursting up the hollow fabric.

'How long do they go on here, do you know?' asked Mr. Peignton.

'Oh, into June, I should fancy,' said the young lady. 'They wind up with races. Can't you imagine them? And then a ball at the town hall.'

'You go back to London, I suppose?'

'Yes. South Kensington sees me to-morrow. But perhaps you call that a suburb!'

She lived in South Kensington and her name was Cranby. Alert and quick of ear, he had picked up the name from a passing greeting. She lived with her mother, who, from the daughter's manner of speaking of her, must be a widow. Cranby! There was a certain Lord Adolphus Cranby, a well-known admiral, who had died a few years ago, leaving considerable wealth behind him. The names of Lady Adolphus and Miss Cranby were often seen in the fashionable gossip of the newspapers. In all human probability this was the girl.

'You know I have never been here before,' Miss Cranby condescended to explain.

Clara Budsworth was her friend. She had never seen the others. Clara had been lost sight of, but had suddenly sent the invitation. Would Miss Cranby come down and bring her horses?

Well, Miss Cranby guessed that she could about see the fun on old Katafelto (running her whip along his hog mane), so she just brought him—and him only. But the dances had bored her to tears, and the young men, the local young men, and indeed the whole thing, had been a bit of a shock.

'And the squire—Mr. Budsworth. They all call him squire, as though it were a title. Isn't it too funny for words?'

Mr. Peignton agreed that it was all very funny, but, at the same time, he wondered. Something in this amusing review of her entertainers jarred against his marvellous instinct. But then he remembered that ladies are indubitably allowed to utter reflections which no man may venture, however facetiously expressed, without the risk of getting written down a snob—in large letters. This thought reassured him. It was all right.

'But the squire is a dear old thing, whatever you call him!'

Just then the old thing himself rode up.

Seeing his attractive young guest enjoying a somewhat lengthy, and not unobserved, chat with the elegant stranger, it occurred to Mr. Budsworth's rustic mind that it would be but tactful, courteous and proper for one in his position to join in the conversation.

After some expressions of regret at the lack of sport—apologies received with the utmost urbanity—he ventured on a compliment.

'How really well that horse fences!' he said cordially.

Mr. Peignton seemed hardly to understand.

'This horse?' he said, with the slightest lift of his well-marked eyebrows, and pointing down with the end of his whip at the satiny-brown neck. 'Oh yes.'

Poor Mr. Budsworth felt that he had committed a solecism.

There was a lack of tone, a rusticity in thus praising a man's cattle to his face; and then, too, was it likely that such a spring visitor as this would come out on a horse that fenced badly?

'Phew!' said Mr. Budsworth, puffing out his cheeks, 'how extraordinarily mild it is to-day! Muggy and close—positively *oppressive*!'

And he bustled on and left the two freemasons alone.

'I very much hope that I shall see you again,' said Mr. Peignton, almost seriously.

This was much later. He was riding his chestnut now, and there had been a brief scurry—a short burst after fox or hare, or nothing at all, begun in doubt and ending in disillusion—perhaps

an artifice of the wily old huntsman to give horses a gallop to catch him—to conclude the proceedings of a tedious day.

'See me again!' said Miss Cranby lightly. 'Well, our little world is not so very little after all. But I dare say we shall run up against each other at some dance, or dinner, or——What? Oh yes, I ride in the Park sometimes!'

'I wonder if you will happen to be riding there next Saturday,' said Mr. Peignton slowly, 'at twelve o'clock, at the corner.'

Miss Cranby did not reply in words, but she turned her large eyes full on Mr. Peignton's face and stared very hard.

Mr. Peignton did not quail under the scrutiny of the fine eyes, and this was the close of the conversation, for, just then, the squire arrived to report that the Master had pronounced the word 'Home.'

Miss Cranby gave the faintest inclination of her head as Mr. Peignton gravely removed his hat to the uttermost length of the gold guard.

Mr. Peignton was walking along Pall Mall. It was a little before high noon; a balmy breeze was ruffling the manes of the cab horses, and blowing the golden grains away from chasing sparrows; the genial sun was shining; and Mr. Peignton was looking more like Lord Mount Dreadful than ever.

As your eye fell upon him, gravely pacing westward, you would have guessed that he had just left the Travellers. A few more paces, and you would have thought that he had descended the steps of the Carlton. (You would have known that he could not have come out of the Reform!) Each casual observer instinctively felt that he was a personage—if not a celebrity. Outside the War Office the Dragoon orderly on the grey horse brought his gauntleted hand to his bearskin, automatically saluting, as to some young war lord. A little further on, the liveried servant, chatting with the policeman by the dark green carriage gates, drew back quickly to hold the door, intuitively positive that he would turn in to write his name in *The Book*.

He was faultlessly attired, of course, with that sober magnificence and reticent splendour of the wealth and taste which abhor vulgar display. The *careful* reader will pardon this tailor-like insistence on costume, but when, as in this case, the clothes really are the man, how *can* they be slurred over—conscientiously? A marvellous young man, in truth, looking as though he could buy one side of St. James's Street, if the property were in the market,

and with exactly eighteenpence in silver and threepence in bronze, jingling in his dark grey trousers pocket.

Impostor! mummer! mountebank! And yet I cannot restrain my admiration.

He was all alone in the world, with no other relative than an aunt of meagre revenue at Norwood, with whom he lived. Board and lodging free, with a beggarly pittance of his own to do all the rest, he contrived to carry on the foolish mystery of his strange life. How in the name of wonder did he do it? Too proud to be recognised as having any trade or calling, I believe he had devised some 'half-book' arrangement with an eminently respectable, but fiercely struggling, stockbroker. Perhaps he brought business from Norwood friends of the grim old aunt, and now and then, with infinite dread of discovery, he perhaps sent a hunting acquaintance, in a lordly casual fashion, to give an order to his 'own fellow in the City.' But estimate the sloth with which half commissions must mount up, and what was this as a prop or a stay to persistent magnificence?

Certainly the man was not what is called a true sportsman, because I believe that with iron-fisted economy his means from all sources would have just permitted him to keep two horses, dress like a dishonoured rat-catcher, go seven days a fortnight, and even pay a miserable subscription to some Mudshire Hunt. And that is what your *true* sportsmen would have done. But our friend was first a Dreamer and then a Sportsman. Mudshire would not do because he lived in Fairyland. The world would have been indeed a deep and muddy place if he could not dress it with vain fancies and ride through it as a dream prince. A veritable Alnaschar on horseback, but just so wide awake as to keep his horse's feet out of the crockery basket, he had somehow acquired the trappings and state for his dream ridings. Heaven knows with what toilsome art he sought out his accomplice of a servant, arch mountebank and impostor as his master, and the noble beasts he bestrode, or what sacrifices and deprivations went to the gathering and maintaining of the remainder of his delusive stock in trade. But once set up he would somehow scrape together—aunt-squeezed, stock-jobbed, or saved penny by penny—the pounds necessary for an excursion, and then flash out as we have seen him—drink the light claret and pay the heavy charges of the town's best inn, strike terror at lawn meets, breed envy and malice as he streaked across country, challenge male rivalry, succour beauty in distress, and sometimes, for a fortnight at a time, live and be a true Mount Dreadful. Then, like an opium-

eater awakened, light of head and light of purse from his excess, he would whisk back to the blank obscurity of Norwood.

A well-known and unsuspected figure in many a crack country, in the sunny London streets, at meets of coaches, and in the Knightsbridge Yard, he had hundreds of acquaintance—and friends not one. How could he? To be known was to be discovered. So when men, full flushed with the kindly feelings of the chase, asked him to dine with them, to stop with them a night, two nights, a week, and were refused, they noted him in their minds as reserved, or shy, or odd, but by the inexplicable and instinctive law of hospitality declined, they set him a little higher than before.

At Tattersall's—where he certainly never missed a Sunday in the season—no one among those who greeted him, from the great Dagon of the Field to the cap-touching runners-out, ever noticed that Mr. Peignton was better at looking on than bidding. Or perhaps if they did notice, they remembered that animals of Mr. Peignton's stamp are not to be picked up every sale day, even at Knightsbridge.

A foolish dreamer if you will, but not criminal; as redoubtable a pretender as any confidence-trick man, but performing a harmless trick, after all, which could hurt nobody but himself. Well, can one be so sure about that?

She was there.

She happened to have come tittuping over the tan—tittuping, tittuping up to the corner, as the clock by the gate had both its hands at the top of its face. Amid all the straw-hatted, brown-booted, jacket-flying mob—the cub-hunting muster of the present day, instead of the box-spurred, trouser-strapped throng of that stately part which Mr. Peignton loved to think of—he recognised her in a moment.

'Oh! Mr. Peignton! oh, yes!' said Miss Cranby, shaking hands by the rails, but, apparently, a little doubtful as to who it might be.

'Oh, yes, to be sure! We met down *there*, in that scentless, senseless, muddy, *dreadful* place. And why aren't you ridin'—got no ponies fit or what?' and so forth.

He was surprised at the odd little shock, pleasant, but like an inward twinge, with which he had realised that she was there. She was just the same—the dark hair, &c., and the pert little grey horse Katafelto. The one thing different was the straw hat.

Now the real Lord Mount Dreadful would never have observed

what she wore. He would only have noticed that *she* was there, and would have been well content with that. In justice to that typical nobleman one is compelled to point this out.

Over the rails—he on the gravel, she on the tan—they were soon on the easy, masonic, commit-you-to-nothing terms again. Lightly flitting from subject to subject, they fell, under Mr. Peignton's piloting, to those quaint little modern tea shops, dimly lit retreats full of paper lamp shades and cheap Japanese crockery, presided over by ladies and scattered all about the West End. To speak plainly, would Miss Cranby care to sip a cup of tea and trifle with a biscuit in one of them?

'My dear man, what *are* you talking about?' said Miss Cranby, with one of her stares, but a softer stare than the one down there. 'I suppose you know the mater would have a fit if she knew I was talking to you *here*. A chance acquaintance! You weren't even introduced to me.'

''Ware wire!' thought Mr. Peignton. 'Steady now!' His commerce with young ladies of quality had never been great, and he saw—or thought he saw—that this young lady was *all* quality. Patient riding was required. With the lightest of light hands he slowly approached the awkward obstacle. Would a change of the meet do? Tea in South Kensington, for instance, with him dropping in on the mater at the orthodox hour?

'Good heavens, no!' and she laughed. 'What should *I* say? "Mamma! this is the gentleman who jumped the railings which I told you about." Eh! You can't imagine the mater'—and she looked round, as though to see if some invisible groom was already watching and waiting to report to the mater.

Mr. Peignton thought he could imagine the mater very well. In his mind's eye he could see the big, red-brick mansion, the high barouche waiting at the door of an afternoon, the footman at the carriage wheel, the footman on the steps, the venerable butler in the hall, the stately lady herself coming out for her turn in the Park or her round of visits to other stately ladies of the titled classes. No. Perhaps the mater would not be effusive if he were to present himself.

'No,' said Miss Cranby. 'I can't come to tea with you, Mr. Peignton,' and she stooped in her saddle to whisper confidentially; 'and you really mustn't come up and speak to me again if you see me,' and she and Katafelto tittuped lightly away.

Another Park—Battersea this time—and Mr. Peignton sitting on a bench beneath a plane tree, watching the afternoon sunlight

make patterns with the broad leaves above on the short grass below, watching the white flash of bicycle wheels and the yellow flicker on the water, listening to the distant crunch of horses and the lap of the little waves against the neighbouring granite of the wall—watching, and listening, and waiting.

Yes; she had leant over the rails again and again. She had taken many teas in those paper-shaded retreats. She had come over the water for light refreshment beneath the plane trees after her spin on the bicycle, not once, but many times. Could she but have guessed, seizure after seizure must have been the mater's portion.

Greatly daring, she had braved discovery from her noble relatives, risked meeting some cousin, some uncle, some *real* Mount Dreadful, at any moment. Knowing that it was all too shocking for words, as she assured him so often, she had burst through the conventional trammels of her position, and laughing at the laws of wealthy, ranky, tony society, had permitted him to summon her hither and thither, far and wide—to tea. Never to lunch or to dinner. No. There were reasons why he never attempted the more solid outrage on convention.

And now, with a white flash of metal, and a whirr of skirt and shuffle of dismounting feet, the wonder-working, chaperon-destroying wheel had brought her to his side.

'I suppose it can't go on for ever,' she was saying presently. 'We *must* be found out soon. And then you'll be flying off abroad, somewhere—or to your own place.'

Mr. Peignton winced.

'You said something about yachtin'. D'you mean to take one this year?'

One what? Oh yes! one yacht. Mr. Peignton shivered.

'It's all so soon over,' she continued. 'Ascot, Goodwood, and then, of course, you rush off for Cowes. And after that, it's the moors.'

Mr. Peignton moved his hand uneasily, like a sleeper disturbed in his dream.

'*We* shan't go to Scotland. I know I shan't get the mater there this year. Have you arranged yet about a moor?'

Mr. Peignton restlessly turned and shifted, as one persistently roused and shaken from dreamland.

'Anyhow, you will go one way and I another. And when we shall meet again—*le bon Dieu peut dire*'—and her eyes rested softly and lingeringly on his grave face, in a manner out of character with her little shrug and her careless tone.

THE WONDER-WORKING, CHAPERON-DESTROYING WHEEL HAD BROUGHT HER TO HIS SIDE

What was the arch pretender thinking about? Had the dreamer awakened? In spite of the dry-tongued waiting, the flutter of pleasure at her gracious presence, there had been constant twinges of pain in these last meetings.

Very seldom had it befallen Mr. Peignton to be overpowered by a horse. Out of hand for the briefest space horses will be sometimes with the most consummate riders. And such a momentary experience came uninvited to his thoughts now—the wild tearing plunge, the beat of the flying feet, the scream of the rushing air, the barrier before racing towards you, the throbbing brain and the strained muscles and tightened nerves. And yet the whole sensation, as a novelty, is exhilarating.

'Edith.' They had come to *that* ages ago. 'Edith,' he murmured huskily, 'it rests with you. Will you be brave, my darling, and say we need never part again?'

'Brave?' she whispered. 'Brave?'

'Yes, brave enough to marry a poor nobody—to take me, as what I am, for better or worse?'

He had not the smallest doubt that he was being run away with now.

'A poor man?' She was leaning forward, with a trembling lip and a very white face.

'My dearest girl, I know what your friends will say, what everybody will think. You will hear me called an adventurer, a fortune-hunter. But it isn't so. I have nothing in the wide world to offer you but my love, and yours is all I want in return. It's only *you* I want, whatever people say, and I'll prove it. I'll work, I'll——'

But here Miss Cranby covered her white face with her shaking little hands and burst into a fit of violent tears.

'Oh, George, George, why have you done this?' she sobbed. 'Why did you pre-pre-pretend to be a swe-swell with he-heaps of money? Oh, it's too, too cruel!'

And the poor girl sobbed out the burden of her disillusionment. Of course, she thought he was rich, very rich, with castles, and mountains, and rivers of his own—somewhere—a real prince and not a dream prince. Why had he done it? It was wicked of him to go riding about on two such horses and winning a poor girl's love with his conjurer's outfit. Oh, oh, oh! It was too heartless.

'I am very sorry,' said Mr. Peignton sadly. 'But does it matter so much? You don't really care about money?'

'I don't care about money, but how can one live without it?

If you are a pauper, and I am a pauper, what's the good of talking about it?'

Then slowly, and with a sob and a gulp or two at important details, Mr. Peignton learnt the true state of affairs. He had never read 'Our Mutual Friend,' or he *must* have thought of Mr. and Mrs. Lammle! There was no admiral, no Lord Adolphus, no barouche, no red-brick mansion in the story. A mean little street near Earl's Court station was the correct address.

'I never wanted to pretend,' she said. 'But you seemed so grand that I was *afraid* to tell you the truth at first. And then you went on talking so grandly that I never dared. The poor mater worried my life out to bring you to the house. She hated your never coming. But how could I bring you? I thought you would laugh at us, and that I should never see you again.'

'But you *must* have plenty of money to dress, to *look* as you do,' he said with splendidly unconscious self-condemnation.

'We've fo-fo-four hundred a year between us—mother and me,' she cried.

'But Katafelto?'

'Le-le-lent me by a friend—and he's nearly ruined me for his ke-ke-keep,' she sobbed. 'He sta-sta-stands at a mews behind Kensington Church, and I owe for six we-we-weeks.'

There was a little imp with a toy, and it dropped the toy to run to fetch its nurse to see the man kissing the lady and making her cry.

But Mr. Peignton was really trying to make the lady leave off crying. And at last a smile crept back to the pretty tear-stained face, and then they laughed—laughed at each other and at themselves. Destiny must have meant one for the other. Grown-up children, playing their silly game of make-belief, where could either have found such a willing, clever, delightful fellow-playmate as the other?

CYCLING IN SHETLAND

BY BARBARA F. WYLIE

'In the Springtime'—the poet tells us—'young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.' If this is still the case, I am afraid he often pipes in vain for a mate, since in these progressive and athletic days young woman, ever less prone to sentiment than young man, turns her fancy rather in the direction of her outdoor games and pastimes; and, since cycling has taken such a firm hold of her affections, she turns in particular to her prospective travels on her winged wheel which she has just freed from its oily winter trappings. We have all of us ridden for a considerable time now, and are somewhat tired of scouring the country in our immediate neighbourhood; so to those who, thirsting for novelty, are casting about them for unexplored regions, the following short account of some rides in Shetland last year may not come amiss.

To my mind the only drawback to cycling in Shetland is the necessity of first getting there. To a good sailor the sea passage —of about eighteen hours—is a mere nothing; to a bad one it is a horrible nightmare which I will pass over in silence (not that we were either of us ill, but since we felt sure we were going to be, it was almost as bad), spinning my yarn from our arrival in Lerwick. This quaint and picturesque little town lies at the foot of a hill, so willy-nilly one is obliged to follow the advice of old hands at cycling and start one's journey slowly. The main street is flagged, and goes zig-zagging round all sorts of unexpected corners. The vehicular traffic in it is fortunately practically nil, as we found we had quite enough to do to steer

our way through the groups of natives, who, busily engaged in gossiping, either disregard the sound of our bells altogether, or else jump away, some to the right and some to the left, leaving a hesitating few still planted in the middle.

Having spent one day in making plans and recovering from the sea-sickness we had expected to suffer from, we eagerly mounted our 'bikes' on the second day for our first ride, which we had decided should be to Scalloway, the ancient capital of Zetland. It is within easy distance from Lerwick, and the guide-book assured us the road thither lay through 'scenery eminently characteristic of the islands.' It took us some time to get clear of the town, as we were irresistibly attracted to the huts in 'Fleet Street,' where the women are busily engaged in the necessary but extremely unæsthetic occupation known as 'gutting the herrings.' As they rustle past one on their way to business, one's first idea is 'how very extravagant to "gut herrings" in a gown made up on silk;' but on closer inspection one finds that they do not walk in silk attire, but are covered from neck to heel in an oilskin overall which has the same fascinating *frou-frou*, and is a very necessary garment for the work they are engaged in. Even then they are as scaly as mermaids in no time. Fascinated as we are by the dexterity with which the old hands work (one slit with the knife, one rip with the thumb, and it is done), the fishy smell drives us away, and, pushing our machines up the long hill, we arrive on the open moorland scarred in criss-cross lines by the peat cuttings. Here the old men and women are busy packing their peat into baskets, which they sling on their backs and carry away to their huts, where it is stacked ready for winter.

Quaint old bodies many of the old women are. With close-fitting caps framing their withered cheeks and moccasin-like shoes on their feet (home-made these from the skin of the defunct cow), they toddle along, bowed beneath the weight of years—and the basket—but knitting and gossiping as they go. Soon we leave the peat gatherers behind, and spin along the road of the 'eminently characteristic scenery.' Very grim scenery it is too. Nothing breaks the monotony of the dull green hills (for some unknown reason trees refuse to grow in the islands); the very heather is short and stubbly, hence the absence of ground game, although now I believe grouse are being carefully reared by one proprietor, whose keeper's greatest enemies are the 'corbies.' And yet the very monotony has an indescribable charm; one never tires of watching the play of light and shadow on the undulating

WE LOOK DOWN UPON SCALLOWAY

moor, the clouds hanging so low one can scarce distinguish where they end and the sea begins. (The sea is never very far from you in Shetland, and winks a friendly blue eye at you in most unexpected places.) Having no traffic to contend with, and seeing no ascents 'dangerous to cyclists,' we scuttle up hill and down dale until, arriving at the top of the very last climb, we look down upon Scalloway.

To the left of the bay is a tongue of land stretching far into the sea, upon the tip of which stands the ancient castle built in 1600 by Earl Patrick Stewart. A charming person this, from all accounts, who provided entertainment for his friends by hanging his enemies to the stout ring one can still see fixed to the tallest chimney. I suppose he preferred seeing to these little matters himself, as he could have had all his executions carried out 'with promptness and dispatch' just across the bay on 'Gallow Hill,' the Tower Hill of Shetland, where all public executions took place. The last one on record is the burning of Barbara Tulloch and her daughter for witches early last century. From this same Gallow Hill a splendid view is obtained on a clear day of the scores of small islands rising from the sea hereabouts. The day we saw them they were enveloped in a thick sea-mist, and loomed through it like a shoal of marine monsters advancing to devour the land. Having explored the castle and climbed the hill, we felt we had done well in the matter of sightseeing, so, remounting our bicycles, we set out on our homeward way. We decided to return by the lower road which runs along the Vale of Tingwall. (In the Loch of Tingwall is the small island upon which the Courts of Justice assembled in olden times.) The gates of the little kirkyard standing invitingly open, we passed through them to moralise awhile among the tombs. Many of the stones are of very great age, but we were most attracted by one of modern date. It bore an inscription: 'To the memory of Jeannie Macpherson, who perished in the Vale of Tingwall in the great snowstorm of December 1887.' Poor Jeannie, we were told, was out with her lover when they were overtaken by the sudden blizzard. The young man escaped, but how he came to leave the poor girl to perish I never heard. I hope she haunts him.

The roads in Shetland are for the most part excellent, and this one being no exception, we pedalled along gaily with the wind at our backs until we were brought up sharp by the stiff climb to the top of the hill, where the lower road once more joins the higher one. We lingered often by the way to try to make

friends with the herds of native ponies grazing on the hillside. Brave little beasties they are, who stared at us with bright eyes shining through their matted manes, their little faces full of curiosity and intelligence. Reluctantly we leave them, and, with a long, long push and a strong, strong push, reach the top of the hill, and so drop down again into Lerwick.

The next run we had set our minds on was to Hillswick, the third most important port in the island, forty miles away on the west coast. Ourselves we had no difficulty in conveying there, but how to get her maid and what she calls the 'comforts,' without which my friend refuses to budge, was quite another story. Not one of the fishermen would hear of taking his boat round (nor did we wonder when we looked at the maps); open boats, they said, were not suited to that coast, and for 'women bodies' the easiest and most accommodating way would be to hire a gig. This was a sad come-down, as we had so looked forward to the sea journey (by proxy of course!); but, since we could not wait for the steamer which only plies once a week, gig it had to be, and with many injunctions to the driver as to the proper feeding and resting of his horse, we started off one fine morning feeling that perhaps it was sustaining to know the despised gig was behind us ready to pick up the bits in case of accidents. (The start was rather delayed by the fact that the Boots had so packed the little basket of food we were taking with us on to my machine that, though it looked very neat and symmetrical, it quite prevented my getting on!) It always seems to blow more or less in Shetland, and on this occasion it was decidedly more, but as the wind was behind us we did not complain. The first six miles of our journey lay through the already explored Scalloway road, but after passing Laffrith in Tingwall Vale we came upon new country.

We had stupidly forgotten to bring our little map, and as there are no finger-posts (at least there were not then; there may be now, as a County Councillor faithfully promised us he would see to it!) we were in mortal dread of losing our way; but, going bravely on, we came upon a man breaking stones by the roadside. In his best English he directed us to be sure and avoid the first turn to the left, as that led only to the village of Voe. As we were looking for Brae, which was to be our first halting-place, we said we would certainly avoid the fatal turn; so when we came upon it we tore away round to the right, leaving it and the water well at our backs and getting the wind straight in our faces. This made riding hard labour, and we toiled on for three mortal

WE LINGERED BY THE WAY TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE NATIVE PONIES GRAZING ON THE HILLSIDE

miles in silence, if not in tears, until outside a crofter's hut we espied two ancient mariners.

'How far is it to Brae, please?' we yelled (the wind necessitated the yell).

'You are not on the Brae road at all, leddies; this leads to Skillberry!'

Collapse! That awful stone-breaker, we found, had never told us that we should take the *second* turn to the left, which was just round the corner cheek by jowl with the one we had avoided like the plague. Our ancient mariners poured forth a stream of instructions as to where we were not to go and what 'grinds' (gates) we were to open, but as in their excitement they broke into broad Shetlandese, it was two not much wiser but considerably sadder women who remounted their machines and retraced their wheelings to what the old men called the 'conjucture' of the roads. But with the wind at our backs once more we soon reached it, and what a lovely road it proved to be! On the right the hill rises straight and steep, on the left a little stream of the delicious brown peat water (like the famous soap, matchless for the hands and complexion, ladies!) rushes and scrambles through the heather to the voe at the foot. (A 'voe' is an arm of the sea pushing into the land; a miniature Norwegian fjord.)

Nestling under the hill is the village of Voe, a picturesque little settlement beloved of the wily angler. Our road now lies close along the waterside, and we fly along exulting in the glory of the day and the ever-fresh beauties of the scenery as it unfolds itself panorama-like before our gaze as we round hill after hill. The sea has pushed and edged its way among these hills in a truly marvellous manner, here widening out like an inland lake, there narrowing to little more than a slender stream flowing between two grim hills, which stand like stern custodians saying: 'Thus far shalt thou come and no further.'

On the sunlit hillside across the water the shepherds are herding up the sheep with the aid of their unnaturally intelligent dogs. Their cries are borne on the wind to our ears and are not unwelcome sounds, as the road we are on is known to be the favourite haunt of the 'little people,' and although it is only after dark they object to human beings sharing it with them, it is just as well to have company in such uncanny spots. Hurrying on again we emerge on to the main road, along which a handsome girl is legging it at a great pace; of her we once more ask our way, and, with the inborn courtesy of the true Shetlander, she at once offers to turn back with us, as, about a quarter of a mile

away, there is a gate we ought to go through but which we shall certainly miss if left to our own devices. When you reflect that this girl was walking into Lerwick, a distance of at least thirty miles, you will appreciate her kindness as we did. Once through this gate the road was all down hill to Brae, and with visions of luncheon in our minds we flew along it without a thought of more haste less speed, till, missing our right turn at the foot, we found ourselves confronted by nothing more hospitable than the sea-shore and an upturned boat. Round about face in the teeth of the gale we had to turn, and arrived at the inn at last, breathless and buffeted, but safe and sound, and—hungry! After refreshing the inner woman and resting an hour we sallied forth once more, being told with a somewhat malicious smile by the waitress that our way lay over 'that hill,' pointing to a thing shaped like a sugar cone just opposite.

Some evil spirit also inspired her to call after us a parting instruction that when we came to somewhere we were to turn to the right—or did she say left?—for Hillswick. If we took the wrong turn we should come to Olla Berry instead. If only she had let us go in peace! Olla Berry haunted us now like a nightmare, and yet there seemed to be but one road, so how could we miss it? We could see it stretching for miles in front of us, winding like a long white snake across the moor.

Moorland to the right of us and moorland to the left of us, nothing human in sight, only the sheep munching away as usual and an occasional herd of ponies, the foals gambolling round their mothers, who were making haste to eat up all the grass they could while it was at its richest and best. We spare a few moments to hunt for the luck-bringing white heather which is supposed to be found on this moor, but, not finding any, we ride on again till, woe is me! we do actually come to a 'conjucture' of the roads. Now, did that woman say right or left for Olla Berry? Oh! for the C. T. C. and a finger-post. Vainly we spy, like Sister Anne, down the road for the gig and the driver who must know the way. Reduced to the slough of despair, long do we stand and debate, but finally, deciding that the road to the left looks more cut up than the one to the right, we take it, and of course immediately wish we had chosen the other, for that at least leads down hill and this one goes up. We don't cry 'Excelsior!' for there is no one to hear us and we need all our breath for the climb, so in silence we toil upwards and onwards, keeping an anxious eye on the clouds that have been gathering ominously for some time. And soon they burst, and then the deluge! The

wind, blowing behind the rain, causes it to beat on our shoulders with such force that it jumps up again in little squirts.

Giggling feebly in spite of our misfortunes, we struggled on with our skirts getting wetter and wetter, and our faces assuming a painfully piebald appearance as the dye is gradually washed on to them from our veils. Our feet, too, slip so often from the wet pedals that we are obliged to dismount as we drop down a very steep slope into a village at the foot, which we are now firmly convinced it will be just our luck to find is Olla Berry after all.

But Fate is not so unkind; it is indeed Hillswick we have stormed, and our host's house at the end of the village being pointed out to us, we slink away with as much dignity as our clinging garments will allow, to be met with such kindliness and hospitality that, being once more clothed and in our right minds (the gig overtook us just as we reached the house), we forget all the misadventures and remember only the joys, which are many, of our ride.

Like giants refreshed we rose next morning, all agog to make acquaintance with the magnificent coast scenery for which Hillswick is famous. The inland scenery is very much the same all over the mainland, but the coast-line is full of variety and wild rugged beauty. The rocks rise steep and sheer to great heights, here jutting out far into the sea, there being gradually beaten back by the ever-encroaching waves, which, in winter especially, beat with relentless force into the land. Some of the stacks of rocks are glorious. One in particular—called 'the Drongs'—is a pillar-like rock rearing itself a hundred feet above the water, and bearing a strange resemblance to the pillars of an ancient cathedral.

A little further round the cliff stands the lighthouse. A stout rope is now stretched across the point on which it stands to enable the man who trims the lamps to reach it without having to crawl there on his hands and knees, which undignified position he formerly had to adopt in order to avoid being swept off the point by the tearing wind. It was on these heights that on Jubilee night the villagers built a huge fire, and twenty-two couples danced round it to the strains of the village fiddler. One envies them their steady nerves to dance on that giddy eminence and so near the edge. We did not leave without seeing Olla Berry after all, as our host drove us there in the afternoon behind his very smart pair of cobs—imported from Orkney. After admiring his herds of ponies, we tried to start a home Klondyke

by digging a little gold out of the cliff, but our efforts were not crowned with the success they deserved. (Gold really exists in this cliff, but in quantities too small to repay the working expenses.)

Next morning being Sunday, we had to make a very early start on our homeward way to avoid running into the Kirk folk. It was sacrament Sunday, too, when all the elders attend attired in their wedding garments. We met one old gentleman whose suit presented a very 'Early Victorian' appearance, so doubtless he was one. And so home, or at least to Lerwick, without any mishap beyond a side-slip and a puncture—neither very serious.

I have described these two runs as being the longest and most varied, but there are others—shorter rounds, but just as charming. To ladies riding alone Shetland possesses one undoubted advantage—that bugbear, the tramp, is unknown.

One also escapes that other bugbear, one's lamp, as, although Shetlanders cannot boast of a midnight sun, they can in midsummer rival their neighbours the Norwegians in the length of their days. Altogether there are many points in Shetland's favour for cyclists: the hills, though numerous, are none of them dangerous, the road surface is for the most part excellent, the climate is bracing, and the air, fragrant with heather bloom and salted with sea spray, delicious. Time need never hang heavy on one's hands; there is excellent fishing to be had almost for the asking, and for those to whom the 'mere joy of living' is not enough, and who like to engage in the laudable occupation known as 'improving their minds,' there is ample scope in the study of the ancient superstitions and legends still religiously believed by many of the islanders.

The hotel accommodation is very good, and the steamer, the 'Earl of Zetland,' runs twice a week to the Northern Islands of Unst, Yell, &c., 'where the shawls come from.'

LANDING AT AJACCIO

FREE FISHING IN A FAIR ISLAND

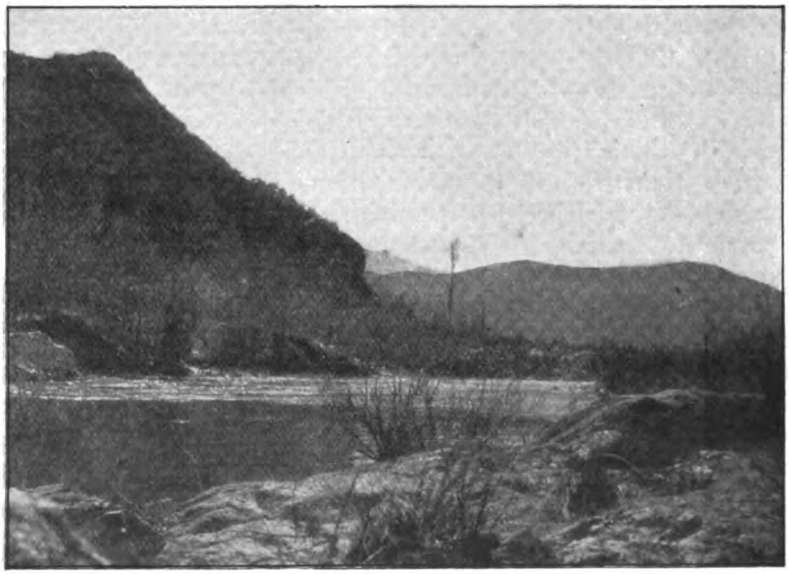
BY W. K. ROBERTSON

SOME of us are anglers, and many of us are impecunious; and this article is written for the benefit of those of the former class who labour under the disadvantages of the latter. The happy waters in which we fished are absolutely rent free; the fishing is at its best in the spring of the year, between February and May, and the climate is perfection. It is known to a few, and those who know it return annually with the devotion and fidelity of the swallow in its yearly migration. This desirable land is Corsica, an island which deserves from its many attractions to be better known by the British sportsman. Besides the fishing there is in late autumn good snipe and duck shooting; while there are boars on the hills to be shot—the country is not adapted to pig-sticking—and moufflon on the mountains, though these latter are scarce. There are rivers in most parts of the island worth fishing—on the west coast the Liamone, Prunelli, and Gravone, the last two being within reach of Ajaccio, and therefore heavily fished; in the south, the Taravo and Rizzanese; in the east, the Fiuonorbo, the Tavignano, and the Golo The most convenient

method of fishing the waters, for those who do not mind roughing it a little, is to strike inland and make their headquarters in some conveniently situated inn. The living is cheap, though the charges are beginning to rise, owing to the increase of tourists; the 'pension' is usually from 5 fr. 50 c. to 7 fr. per diem, inclusive of everything. In Ajaccio the hotels are now in the Continental style, and the charges are proportionately high, as is only natural since there is a regular winter season there.

But to return to our fishing. I will describe a day spent by a party of four in the northern part of the island. Two of us knew the district well, while two were visitors for the first time; but all four were keen fishermen, and anxious from obvious reasons to catch enough fish to supply another course for dinner in the evening and for breakfast on the following day. We always made an early start, partly from the fact that the natives also are early risers, but chiefly because the best fishing is in the morning before the sun has reached its full powers. As we generally went some distance up or down stream before beginning to fish, the morning minutes were far too precious to be wasted; five o'clock therefore usually saw us astir. By that time the sun topped the hill opposite, and the mists gradually faded away from the lower ranges, while the higher peaks stood out white and clear against the blue sky. We soon assembled downstairs for breakfast, a meal which took place at any hour; whether our shout came at 4 A.M. or 8 A.M., when we descended there appeared a dish of trout smoking-hot fried in olive-oil, to be followed by an inimitable omelette. There were two things which made us at times regret the flesh-pots of Egypt—the 'butter,' which was no butter, but an exceedingly near relation of cheese; and the bread, which, when fresh, possessed a crust of adamantine hardness, and at all times a leathery consistency, that afforded good exercise for the teeth and digestive organs. We, being old friends of the landlady, had all the accommodation which the hotel could afford—four bedrooms and a sitting-room on the second floor, the first floor being occupied by the dining-room, the kitchen, and its dependencies, while the attics were devoted to stores and to such young chickens as were too small to be trusted on the ground floor within reach of the omnivorous pig. In most Corsican houses the ground floor consists of stables, but we were spared that, the space being occupied by the cellars and larders. During breakfast we discussed the beats to be fished, and as our quarters were within easy reach of three rivers, we had ample water to choose from.

It was arranged that V. and M. should go up the main stream some five miles to fish downwards, while F. and I went up one of the two tributary streams to the distance of seven or eight miles. This entailed for us a tramp of about four miles along one of the Government roads, beautifully metalled and the gradient most carefully engineered; but the rest of the journey was over a mere mule-track, and the loose stones were of all sizes and without number. As waders about double the efficiency of the angler, it required considerable keenness to tramp those miles over rough ground with a fairly heavy lunch-kit, and the Corsican sun scorching down on the back of the toiling fisherman. However,



A QUIET SPOT

when breakfast was over—the quince jam was hard to leave—we lit our pipes, slipped on waders and brogues, and, with mutual wishes for good luck, separated on our respective routes. Our road led us past the railway station, where the toy engines stop three times a day on their tortuous and difficult journey from Bastia to Ajaccio. On our way we passed an Italian—all the hard work is done by immigrant labour—building a wall of stones without mortar; there is a superabundance of material even in the best cultivated field, as the soil is exceptionally stony. As an instance of this the next field was a striking example; it was a vineyard belonging to a comparatively wealthy landowner, and though to our knowledge the labourers had been clearing stones off

this for three years, and had built a wall round the vineyard five feet thick in places with the clearings, still there was no appreciable diminution in the number of stones on the surface of the field. We then crossed the river by the Ponte Rosso and began the uninteresting part of our trudge; on the right rose a brown bare hill about 3,000 feet high, with little patches of cultivated land on its slopes, on both sides of which we had often hunted for the wild boar, though we have never had the luck to find him at home. On the left some eight miles away across low hills rose the sharp peaks of Monte Pertuso, the pinnacles crowned with snow, against which the huge pines visible in this clear atmosphere stood up in bold relief. Further north the snow-crowned head of Monte Cinto towered over the intervening hills.

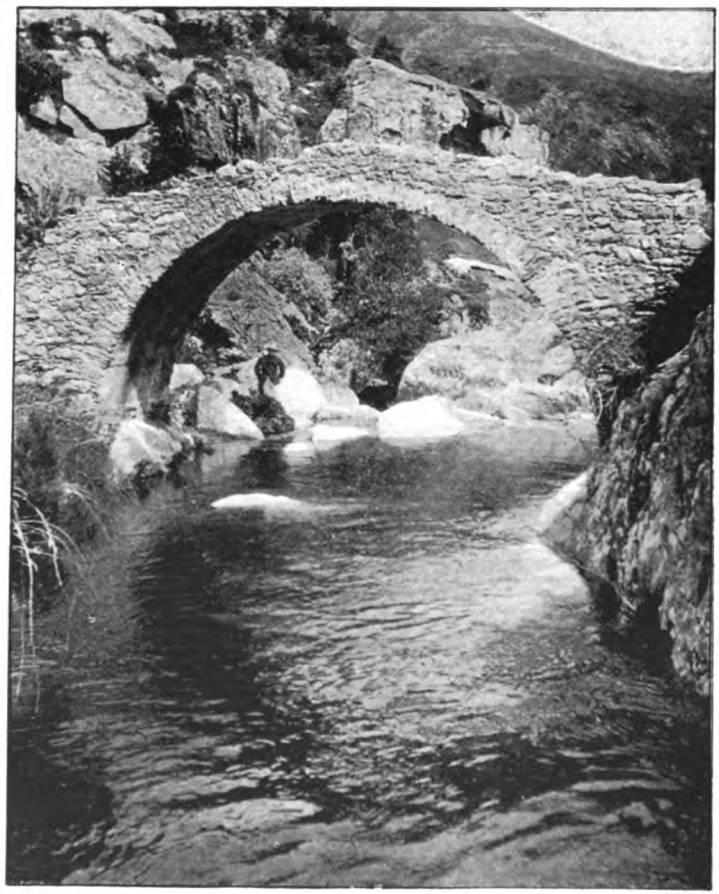
After we had tramped along the road for about an hour, we left the highway and, fording a small stream, continued on a rough track, one of the many thousands which cover the island like network. This track followed the line of the river to our destination, an old stone bridge, probably a relic of the Genoese, made of rough stone much worn by passing mule traffic. Here we had a short rest, including a pipe and a pull at the wine flask; we then put our rods together and set to work, the time being about 8.30 A.M.

Perhaps a short digression on tackle and method of fishing may be permitted here. In this fast water it is of course necessary to fish down stream, and, the water being very clear, fine tackle is essential. The native outfit is, however, very primitive, consisting of a long bamboo—grown in the island—with a few yards of line wound round the top, ending in a strand of thick gut about a foot in length with a single large fly—silk body of various shades of grey—and a grey hackle. But a professional fisherman of my acquaintance in the neighbourhood would sometimes bring in 15 lbs. of trout to his own rod, when we could not muster that amount between us; the large margin being no doubt due to greater accuracy, and a better knowledge of the water and the habits of the fish. The most killing patterns we found to be red and blue quills dressed with a hackle instead of starling wing; blue duns and March browns. The native pattern is a form of blue dun dressed on a No. 2 or 3 hook, our favourite size being No. 1.

As regards the size of the fish, I have never myself seen one taken out of these waters heavier than 1½ lb., though the fishermen talk of fish weighing 2 or 3 kilos up in the hills caught with a grasshopper or dead bait late in the season; but unless they have special tackle, a large fish would not be likely to succumb to anything but the net or dynamite, which I have

heard mentioned, though they would not be likely to use the latter in a district patrolled by the gendarme. There is water enough in all the rivers to harbour large fish, and enough small fry to sustain them, so that there is no inherent improbability in the story of their existence.

But to begin our fishing operations, F. decided to make a start at the bridge, while I went about half a mile or more up



THE OLD BRIDGE

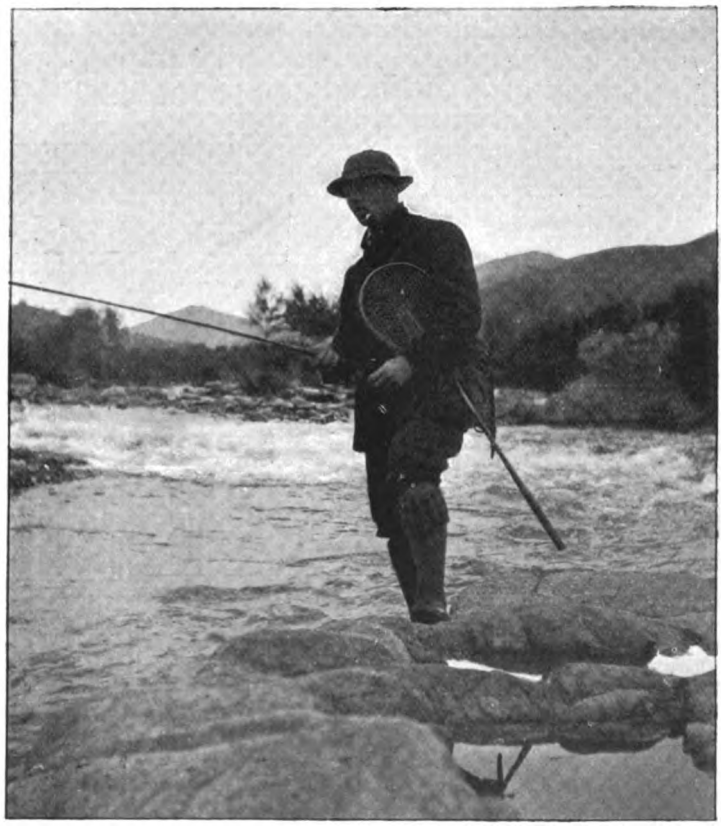
stream and fished from the opposite bank; the river here except in the big pools was easily commanded by a ten-foot rod, though it was necessary to wade where possible in order to fish both banks. The first pool of my beat was typical of the water, the current coming down a rapid shallow reach into a large deep hole under a big rock, with a small backwater in the bay above, the

pool continuing under a deep shelf, ending in a broad strip of gravel and shallow water where the majority of the small fish feed.

It was evidently a lucky day for me, as two average fish succumbed to the blue quill in the backwater above the pool, and I was fast in a good fish under the big rock at the first cast.

Owing to the weight of the fast water and the impetuous rushes of the fish—he fought like a true mountaineer—it took several minutes to get the least control over him; but the cast though fine had been well tested and the flies most carefully knotted on, so that gradually the fish came back from the depths of the pool into which he had dived at the first prick of the steel. But on catching sight of the net incautiously displayed too soon, an irresistible rush carried him back, and the work had to begin again; his previous efforts, however, had exhausted him, and a short struggle saw him slowly dropping down the current to the shallow water, where a bank made a convenient landing-place. Game to the last, it still took much manœuvring to bring him up to the net, but patience was duly rewarded with a good pound fish to carry up the bank. The trout here are much more silvery than our English brown trout, and the red spots are not so numerous; but when freshly killed a good fish is a very pretty sight with its delicate gradations of grey and silver. It is very seldom that they can be brought to look at a dry fly, and the pace of the water is against the use of it, but in some places where the water is very slow I have caught a few fish, and in one millpool the fish appear to 'smut' in the evening on rare occasions. The luck at the start was too good to last, and the next quarter of a mile resulted in many rises but few fish; the pace of the water and the quickness of the fish in rising and descending make misses very frequent, and in addition these trout appear to be extremely tender in the skin of the mouth. Shortly after this disastrous reach, a favourite length of water came into view; by wading with caution and good luck it was possible to fish this from the centre of the stream. The depth here was about three feet, and there were some big rocks in the current under which the trout could shelter. On this occasion the water was about the right height, and the reach yielded *seven* fish from five ounces (the usual size) up to three-quarters of a pound, a few more being successful in their efforts to escape. In a pool just below this reach two years previously I hooked and killed a good fish in most unexpected fashion. I had thrown a fly from some distance into the very head of the pool in apparently shallow water, preparatory to letting out more line for fishing the pool properly lower down,

but on lifting the point of the rod I found a good fish fast, which promptly ran out some ten or twelve yards of line and dived to the bottom of the pool. I had no landing net, but eventually coaxed him on to the shallows and secured him, to the great delight of some passing peasants, who shouted advice in French and Italian, and expressed much satisfaction when the fish was landed. Continuing downwards I came to a reach with comparatively



A FAVOURITE POOL

shallow water and, while fishing over any likely stone, I was much interested to watch a swineherd—to whom I had given some fish, hence his interest in fly-fishing—drive his pigs across the river as I waded from one side to the other. They accomplished the feat several times in the fast water, partly by swimming and partly by wading, and seemed quite used to the performance.

Shortly after this I came upon F. fast in a good fish which

took him some time to land. We then lunched together and compared baskets; he had secured six including the ¾ lb. fish just caught. Lunch to be properly appreciated should be preceded by breakfast at 5.30 A.M.; we did full justice to the hard-boiled eggs, potted meat (our own importation), cheese, bread and fruit, with the wine of the country cooled by sinking our flasks in the river. The general run of the country wine here resembles a rough Burgundy, but the Cap Corse district produces wine both white and red of good bouquet. The cheese was made from the milk of the many herds of goats pasturing on all the neighbouring hills; when fresh it is positively delicious; a few days later it is

HILL SHEPHERD AND HOUSE

only comparatively eatable, and when kept some time, as is the country custom, it is superlatively nasty, being seven times worse than the most virulent Norwegian type. If the fish were off the feed in the middle of the day, as was sometimes the case if the sun was exceptionally hot, we used to bathe in any deep pool and bask in the sun afterwards, the thermometer sometimes reaching 100°; but if the fish were feeding well, lunch became a very movable feast.

We continued our course down stream, fishing alternate pools with varying luck, the trout keeping about the ordinary size, *i.e.* from five to six ounces, while every now and then a larger fish

would cause some anxiety. One of the latter set off to make a rush, apparently for the open sea many miles away, and it was necessary to pursue over the slippery rocks at top speed to get on terms with him. We had now fished down to the main road; below this I have twice seen the natives netting the pools, a method of capturing fish which, though strictly illegal, perhaps for that reason appeals the more to the rustic disposition. From what we saw they must take great quantities of fish in this manner, though owing to the depth of the water and the numerous rocks no pool is absolutely depopulated; still, of course, if persis-

BRINGING CHEESES DOWN FROM THE HILL

tently carried on the result will be disastrous to the orthodox angler. There were some fish left for us this time, and I had the satisfaction of seeing F. land a good one which was hooked in the back fin and offered a prolonged resistance in consequence. We progressed down stream with varying luck; there are some deep holes here in which no doubt some large fish live, but they are too experienced to succumb to our flies, though, perhaps, the 'garden fly' might tempt them; we have never used the worm in Corsica, nor have I ever seen the natives using it.

As it was now half-past five we reluctantly left the river for the road; twenty minutes' brisk walking brought us to the inn,

our baskets containing 24 and 17 trout, weighing about 9½ and 7 lbs. respectively. On reaching the inn we found that our companions had just returned, having had a fairly successful day; the fish, as usual, feeding better in the main stream before the heat of the sun brought the snow-water down. As they had had less distance to cover before beginning to fish they had been able to make the most of the morning rise. V.'s basket contained twenty-five trout and M.'s nineteen. But neither of them had secured a pound fish, which size does not seem so plentiful in the main stream as in the tributaries. Possibly they begin a cannibal diet earlier in heavy water, as naturally the fish collect in the most sheltered places, so that the larger would have more opportunities of preying on the smaller than in quiet water where the small fry would be more widely distributed.

Dinner was served about 6.30, and we did ample justice to the five or six courses provided. After our meal we occupied ourselves with coffee and pipes, letters, diaries, &c., or a rubber of whist or game of piquet, either among ourselves or with one of the post-men from the post-office across the road; each year, for seven successive seasons, he has asseverated complete ignorance of the game, but he plays a remarkably strong hand for a beginner. About 9 o'clock we all retired, well contented with our day's amusement.

No doubt to many the sport will seem poor, but the fish are fairly numerous, and though the average size is not very large, their gameness and the weight of the water cause them to afford excellent sport in comparison to their size. But the chief charm is the great variation of scenery, combined with the perfection of the climate. The life is as wholesome as it is interesting. There is a constant succession of flowers, the most noticeable being a purple cyclamen, a white amaryllis lily, and a species of narcissus. After the end of May the climate gradually becomes unhealthy, as malaria drives the inhabitants up the hills. Most of the villages in the interior are in duplicate, the higher for summer and the lower for winter use. But in the early spring months the air is dry and bracing, while the midday temperature usually falls a little owing to the clouds formed by the evaporation of the snow.

We have never had any trouble with the natives, who during many years have almost without exception shown themselves most hospitable and good-natured. Possibly in the highest forest districts and in the maquis on the mountains there may be some rough characters—for the vendetta still exists—but the ordinary traveller will not meet them, and the angler will usually be met with the courteous salutation of '*bonne pêche et bonne journée.*'

THE SABLE SLUMP

BY L. H. DE VISME SHAW

THERE are some spots, some scenes, nothing could ever make me visit again. They are pictures standing out sharp and clear amid the mist of early days. Vividly they live with me still, as seen through the eyes of a child. Were I to see them now, my pictures in the mist would be lost to me for ever. True, they would yet be there; but, daubed over with the brush of reality and change, their tinted imaginings of youth, their glow, their poetry would be hidden or marred, and they would none the less be really gone from the world; and I love them too well to lose them.

Not the least bright of these pictures in the mist is one connected with the Sable Slump. Almost under the South Downs there stands a small beech wood—it is nearly all beech in that part—where the rooks were wont to build. The wood, as I see it in my mist-framed picture, covers about two acres; the nests number upwards of a hundred. In June the ground beneath the lofty trees is thick with patches of bluebells. The large purple orchis grows there too. Quite near the wood is the wreck of what was once a noble elm. I could crawl through a small hole at the base and climb for some distance up the hollow trunk, the home of a pair of white owls.

I went down to the wood with my father one fine June morning. The keepers were there when we arrived. Soon the Sable Slump was in full swing. I watched the parent birds circling high overhead, uttering wild caws of consternation and alarm; I saw many and many a youngster dropped from the swaying branches or stopped in the course of his nervous, un-

certain flight, often his initial piece of wingmanship. The only active part I played was that of assisting the despatch of wounded birds by heroically battering their skulls against my heel.

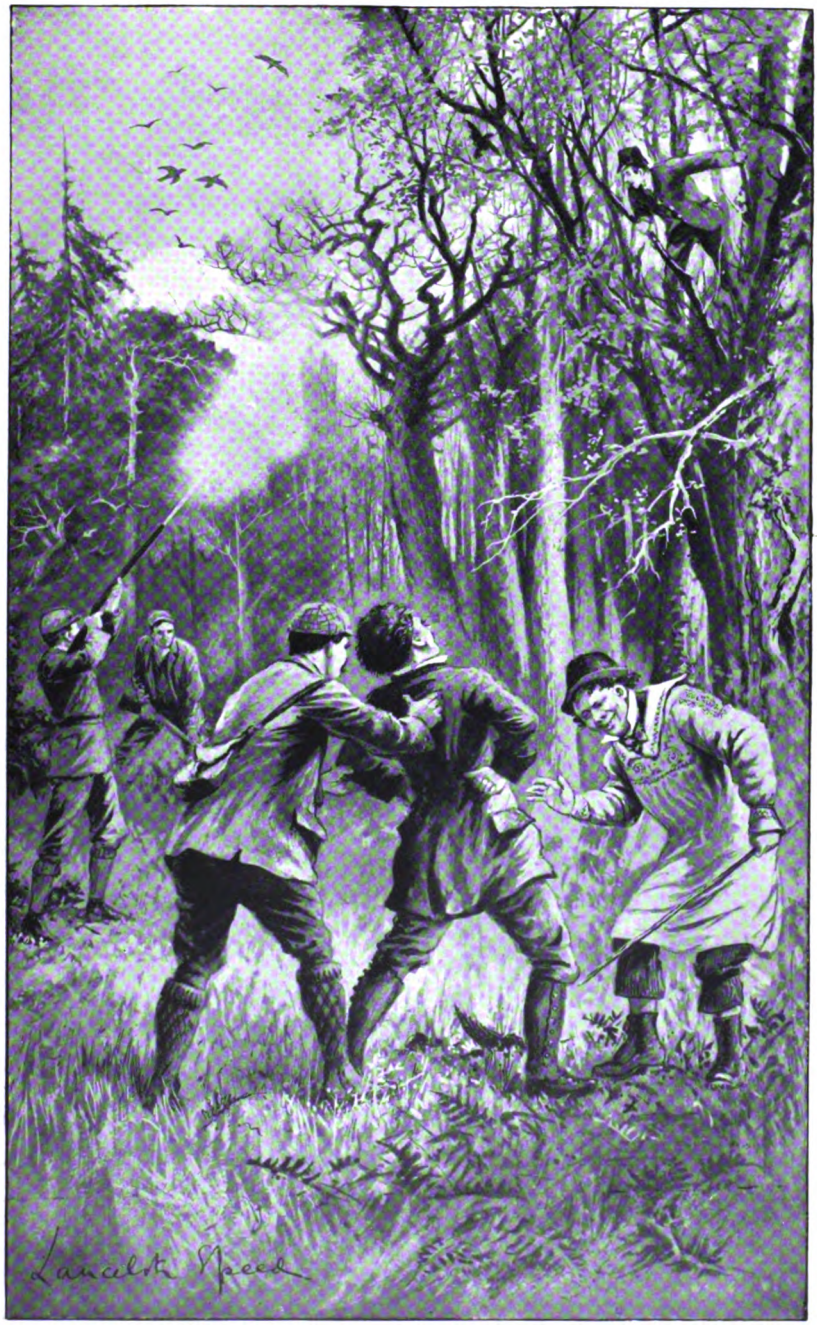
In course of time the postman appeared upon the scene. The postman's lot was cast in pleasant places. After walking from the town, less than three miles away, and delivering letters to the inhabitants of the tiny village, he had nothing wherewith to occupy himself till four o'clock in the afternoon, when he started on his return journey.

Whether the postman wanted that young rook for himself, or whether he merely felt inspired to seize upon the opportunity of demonstrating his climbing powers, which, forsooth, were of no mean order, I cannot say. I only know that he expressed his determination to secure the bird.

The young rook, a backward one, sat among the topmost branches. After several ineffectual attempts the postman eventually succeeded in swarming the trunk and grasping the lowermost bough. But the accomplishment of this feat by no means meant that his success was assured—indeed, his further difficulties proved many and great. Everyone stood still to watch him. It seemed an odds on chance against his ever reaching the top of the tree. By dint, however, of well-nigh superhuman efforts, he managed at last to attain what was practically his goal, a narrow fork only a few feet from where the young rook sat. I think everyone must have breathed more freely when he reached the fork. (The climbing part of my picture is somewhat dim. I paint it as clearly as I can see it across the gulf of time.)

After a few moments' rest the postman roused himself to renewed energy. He stood up in the fork and eyed his prospective prize. The young rook appeared to be in no way moved by its pursuer's proximity. A bang from below brought an abrupt end to this interesting situation. The postman stood in the fork above, the young rook lay a corpse on the ground below. He who fired the shot was unable to resist temptation so great. I do not think I could have resisted it myself. I am unaware whether or no the postman ever climbed another tree after another young rook while there was a gun below.

I carried some of the young rooks home that day, and suffered severely for my enterprise. It fell to the cook's lot to pick the birds, or rather a certain proportion of them, for she also suffered severely, and struck work. She waxed defiant, I remember, and something of a scene occurred. The lice, according to her own



A BANG FROM BELOW BROUGHT AN ABRUPT END TO THIS INTERESTING SITUATION

statement, 'terrified' her beyond all human endurance. The other servants quietly declined the proffered opportunity of distinguishing themselves where the cook had failed. It was not their 'place.' So the remaining birds were handed over to the gardener. Poor fellow! he too was 'terrified.' Days elapsed ere he ceased to scratch. His plaints were loud and long.

The next day we had rook pie, and I liked it. And that is my picture in the mist, my first experience of the Sable Slump.

In many districts, the Sable Slump is viewed as an event of no small importance. Hodge talks of it intermittently and interestedly from the day when first he sees the jetty birds assembling in their favoured clump of trees, where they discuss with ceaseless clamour the repair of old nests or the construction of new. The farmer looks forward to it as a time when it will be given him to nip, or see nipped in the bud, many an individual potentiality for havoc on the farm. The squire and his acquaintances anticipate with pleasure the opportunity of handling gun or rifle which, comparatively tame though rook-shooting may be, comes as a welcome break during so dull a period of the sportsman's year.

Late in February, or early in March, the rooks begin their building operations. The community appears to have but one fixed law—namely, that no pair of birds shall be allowed to build their nest away from the others. Should a venturesome young couple conceive the idea of setting up housekeeping in a tree standing without the boundary, and begin to lay the foundations of their dwelling, the structure is promptly attacked and demolished by the other birds, who appropriate the material and apply it to their own uses. Theft is rife in the rookery at building time. While the duller witted members of the association scour the country round in search of twigs, the cuter ones stay at home, and when the coast is clear, calmly help themselves from the surrounding nests.

The male rook shows becoming gallantry during the time of incubation. He keeps his mate supplied with food, which she receives like a young bird, flapping her wings while being fed.

Though the time when the rooks begin to build remains constant within a very limited number of days, the date of the Sable Slump is one of some uncertainty. Under normal conditions, the young birds should be fit to shoot about the first week in June. When, however, as not infrequently happens, there comes a severe gale during the time of laying, every nest in the rookery may have its contents hurled to the ground, or even

itself be scattered to the four winds. Late frosts, too, will sometimes destroy the fertility of the eggs and necessitate the laying of a second clutch.

As an architect, the rook is a distinct failure. Not only does he build his nest in about the most exposed situation he can find, but, as we have seen, he also builds it of insufficient depth to retain its contents under the stress of a gale. After a wild wind, I have found the ground beneath a rookery strewn with broken eggs and newly-hatched youngsters.

But—to the Sable Slump itself. Let us follow the shooting party.

In front march the squire, his son, and a couple of neighbours, all with rifles under their arms. On their way to the first rookery—there are three or four others to be visited during the day if time allows—they pick up two of the tenant farmers. These, who carry serviceable-looking 12-bores, follow next in order. The head keeper and his subordinates bring up the rear. As we turn the corner, we see the parson waiting for us at his gate. The parson has long since ceased to pull a trigger or ride to hounds, although at one time it would have been hard to find a straighter goer or a better shot. He abandoned horse and gun—poor wretch!—on principle at the same time that he drank his last glass of port and signed the pledge. But though he neither shoots nor hunts, the old fire still glows within him. Never does he miss a meet, never does he fail to put in an appearance when he knows there is powder to be burned.

The parson joins the procession.

Directly we approach within sight of the rookery, an old bird catches sight of us, and, with a long harsh caw, warns his companions of impending danger. Instantly a scene of wild confusion ensues. Well do the birds know what is coming. Some of them have been through it all a dozen times perhaps, or more. They rise above the trees and circle round and round, expressing their alarm in a never-ceasing chorus.

One of the farmers makes his way to the further side of the wood; the other stations himself on the side of our approach. They are sure to have some fair sport among the more forward birds.

When those who carry rifles find themselves beneath the trees, the fun begins at once. There is no unwritten law governing the procedure of the Sable Slump—everyone sets to work on his own account, and is free to wander at will in search of his sombre quarry. Before you can cook your hare, you must catch

him; before you can shoot your young rook, he must be seen. Seeing your bird often proves by no means an easy task when the leaf is forward. The good rifle shot, however, needs only to catch a glimpse of black feathers among the fluttering leaves.

The parson has chosen to remain outside the wood; no doubt he will witness a good display of shooting on the part of the farmer by whose side he has taken his stand. The squire's son and one of the neighbours, who have defiled though probably added zest to their sport by entering into an arrangement briefly epitomised by the proposer as 'a bob a time,' are already popping away at a small colony of birds whose nests happen to have been placed in a late-leafing tree. The other neighbour has also discovered some clearly seen birds, and is busily engaged on his own account. The sound of guns at either end of the wood tells us that a fair proportion of the young birds are forward enough to conceive the idea of danger and strong enough on the wing to seek safety in flight. The day has been well chosen. If it were a little too late, most of the birds would escape; if a little too early, the majority would not yet have left their nests.

Let us place ourselves by the squire's side.

A fair breeze has sprung up; and shooting a young rook as he sways to and fro upon some slender bough demands skill of no mean order. When held at such a mark, the rifle of the novice seldom fails to spend many a fruitless missile. But the squire's little ·220 is in dexterous hands. At the first shot, a bird falls dead, and then another and another, till within quite a short time upwards of a dozen have been gathered together by the keeper.

But soon the fusillade is over. Those birds which could be easily seen have one and all been brought to the ground, and the slower work now begins. Like ourselves, the other members of the party are prowling about and peering upwards, endeavouring to spy out further victims among the denser foliage. One must be prepared for a stiff neck when taking part in the Sable Slump.

Suddenly we catch a glimpse of something black through the fluttering leaves. Only for an instant at a time is it to be seen. At last the squire is able to glimpse it too. Crack goes the little rifle. There is no result save that a leafy twig flutters lightly to the ground. Again our companion fires, and again and again—six times altogether—and still he has failed to hit the object of his aim, as the best of shots will sometimes fail when shooting under like conditions. But see!—the seventh bullet has

found its mark. A black, lifeless bird drops swiftly from the boughs above.

And then the third keeper, a hulking youth, gaunt of frame and rough of tongue, makes himself heard:—'Here's four of 'em a-settin' a'most together, sir—you can see 'em plain back here.'

There they sit sure enough. Only from just the one spot where we are standing can they be seen. Not a yard divides any one of them from its nest. It was probably but a few hours ago that they ventured to stray even thus far into the outer world.

Here we see the squire at his best. The boughs on which the young rooks sit are but little affected by the wind; while between the birds and ourselves there is no obstructing foliage. Four shots bring the four youngsters down one after another.

'How many here?' says the head keeper, coming up to his raw-boned subordinate.

'Eighteen.'

'Eighteen and forty-five—that's sixty-three. It's one over the number now, sir'—this to the squire. 'There's just thirty-one nests, sir, and we've got sixty-three birds.' The squire always limits the bag to two birds a nest.

'All right—we'll go on to Long Wood next. Let them know outside.'

Look at the old rooks now we are out of the wood. What a height some of them have reached! Far up in the blue, they are wheeling round and round, still uttering ceaseless caws which sound but faintly to our ears from such an elevation. When the coast is clear, the birds will soon descend to their desolated homes. Few of them, indeed, will be fortunate enough to find a family which has no representative hanging among those sable bunches that dangle from the keepers' sticks.

We will not follow the shooting party. Did we do so, we should but witness a repetition of what we have already seen.

That the rook has been allowed to increase beyond all reasonable limits is now the general opinion of those who have interested themselves in the much-disputed question as to whether the bird must rank as a friend or a foe to man. Posing as one whose sins are more than counterbalanced by his beneficent works, and having, moreover, the glamour of superstition and romance about him, the rook has long been protected by the lords of the soil. It is the wont of those who own ancestral rookeries to look upon the welfare of the birds as a kind of

'IT'S ONE OVER THE NUMBER NOW, SIR'

hereditary trust. With the tutelage of the Hall—save when once a year a limited number of young ones are killed at the season of the Sable Slump—and the toleration of the deluded farmer, and, further, taking into consideration the immunity of the bird and its nest from natural foes, it is small wonder that our country should have become the rook-ridden country we see it now.

The laudable researches carried out two or three years ago by Sir John Gilmour and Professor M'Alpine enable us to view the rook as he really is, and not what he appears to be under casual observation. During these researches—which extended over a period of twelve months, a certain number of rooks being killed each month—Professor M'Alpine, Botanist to the Highland and Agricultural Society, examined the crops and gizzards of no less than 336 birds. The examination showed that sixty-five per cent. of the food consisted of farm produce, fifty-eight per cent. being grain of different kinds, and seven per cent. roots. A further twelve per cent. came under the heading of 'miscellaneous,' while 'insects, grubs, &c.' amounted to twenty-three per cent. . . . This last item is not all that it might appear at first sight. For every one injurious grub taken from the birds' crops, there were found three insects either non-injurious or actually beneficial to the farmer, the predatory Geodophaga constituting the majority. Not once was the seed of a noxious plant discovered. Professor M'Alpine puts the case in a nutshell when he says: 'The rook has almost no claim to agricultural regard.'

The game-preserver has a heavy score against the sable bird. Not only is the rook an adept at hunting out the nests of game birds, and a determined egg-sucker when the nests are found, but he has even been caught in the very act of slaughtering young pheasants among the coops.

But though the rook drills holes in our turnips and steals our corn, though he quarters our fields and hedgerows, and thieves every egg he can find, though he is, in fact, an unmitigated scoundrel save and except for his one little redeeming virtue of destroying a certain number of harmful grubs; still, there can be few indeed who would not cry out against his extermination—there can be few, indeed, who would not feel that a great, deplorable gap had been made in nature were he rooted out from our midst.

No bird plays so conspicuous a part in the daily lives of most dwellers in the country as the rook. In the early grey of morning we hear his croaking caw as he passes on his way to some favourite feeding ground; as dusk draws near, we watch that

long straggling line forging onwards to the accustomed roosting place. All day long he is about our ways—now dotting our fields with black, now flapping lazily along the landscape, now soaring high in the heavens and darting here and there to warn us of the coming storm. And cawing ever.

Among the many pets of my early days was a tame rook, Sambo by name. The year before Sambo's arrival I tried ineffectually to bring up three or four other youngsters. One poor wretch, I remember, I stuffed to the brim with some broad beans which I had made my own after the sowing was over. I remember, too, that his end was rapid rather than peaceful.

Sambo, who was brought to me by a village boy, had the benefit of my previous experience. Reared entirely on raw meat and worms, he throve amazingly. He developed all the cunning of his tribe. I clipped his wing feathers, and allowed him to roam about at will. We were inseparable companions for several months.

Poor Sambo!—his was a tragic end. One morning he could not be found. After searching high and low, and calling for him everywhere, I at last bethought me of the swill-tub. And there he was—drowned. I fished him out, and buried him; and then I went and hid myself among the shrubs, and shed bitter tears of grief.

THOUGHTS ON SPECTATORS

BY W. J. FORD

If anyone would take the trouble to walk round the ground while a big cricket match is in progress, and note down the criticisms of the spectators, he would probably have in his note-book the materials for a very amusing and instructive paper on the game in general, and on the particular match which was being played. The 'ring' has ever been critical, but it has never been so critical as it is nowadays; it certainly has never been so outspoken in its marks of disapprobation: and if criticism is allowed to extend its bounds as widely as it has done in Australia, all well-conducted grounds will have to follow the example of the music-halls, and provide themselves with a skilled staff of brawny 'chuckers-out.' The argument that a man who has paid his money has just as much right to hiss as to clap is so thin that it requires no formal controversion, specious though it may appear on the surface; but unfortunately a certain section of every crowd derives far more satisfaction from hooting a mistake than from applauding a success. I remember a particular occasion which may well be quoted as a case in point, though I suppress names. A certain batsman absolutely won a county match for his side by a hitting innings of marked brilliancy, for which he was deservedly cheered to the echo. The very next day, on the same ground, he was unfortunate or unskilful enough to miss an easy catch. What was the result? His splendid batting of Wednesday was utterly ignored, and not only was his particular blunder of Thursday hooted, but every ball he stopped, as well as

every ball he failed to stop, was saluted with a hurricane of ironical cheers and derisive groans. Yet this man, practically single-handed, had absolutely landed his county an easy winner twenty-four hours previously. Such is our boasted 'fair play'! It is certainly hard to restrain the exuberance of one's feelings, and one's verbosity, when a single action arouses one's enthusiasm or disgust, but an afternoon's organised hooting is a mean way of expressing grievances. I regret to have to record that, to my mind, the most disgraceful exhibition of feeling that I ever had the misfortune to witness took place in the pavilion of the M.C.C. on the occasion of one of the famous 'no-ball' incidents. But let this suffice.

I wonder if the spectator who feels nowadays that the investment of sixpence gives him an absolute freedom of cheering and 'chi-ikeing' ever reflects on the duration and quality of the entertainment provided for him, or on the great improvements that have during the last thirty years been made for his comfort. To take the first point: he can sit almost 'from morn till dewy eve, a summer's day,' and watch an exhibition that requires first-class skill and science, to say nothing of long practice, for the expenditure of about one penny per hour; no theatre or music-hall will do so much for him, and he has the advantage of fresh air instead of a mingled perfume of tobacco and alcohol into the bargain, though if he choose to indulge in this pernicious compound the means are ready to hand. Next he may reflect on the additions which have, during the last thirty years, been made to his comfort. In the late 'sixties' one had to be early indeed to secure a seat, and even then the seat of those days was no great catch, just a backless form, the majority of spectators being content perforce with a smooth piece of sward on which to recline. They had, to be sure, the advantage of being able to bowl (if they came up armed with a ball, as many did) to those members or players who indulged in a little practice during the luncheon interval; or they could watch the aforesaid practice at one net, and take their chance of a bang on the head from the next-net batsman, who had a prescriptive right to hit anywhere into the crowd as hard as he liked, provided that he did not hit to leg: the leg hit was by tacit but universal consent strictly *tapu*. If the spectator had been lucky enough to secure and retain a seat on one of the adamantine boards supplied to support his frame, there was at least no necessity for his leaving it, unless nature revolted at its adamantinity and backlessness, for a seductive waiter with a bland voice revolved automatically round the ring, 'true as the magnet to

the exiled pole,' the music of the spheres being set to the words of 'Any orders, gents?' such orders being gladly accepted and promptly carried out. The spectator, thus cheered with generous fluid without the trouble of moving from his chosen position, was critical without being insulting. It is a grave misfortune for cricket that the modern onlooker feels that he has a right to express his partisanship and his antipathies in no doubtful way.

The first big match I ever attended was the Eton and Harrow match of 1866, when there was a sublime row. There is no need at this distant date to enter into the reasons; it was a mere question as to whether a certain hit was a boundary hit (such a thing was then unknown except in this match) or not; but, on the umpire's decision being given against Eton, the Eton batsmen left the ground, the crowd broke into the ring, and the playing area was filled with a seething mass of folk, wearing dark or light blue favours, and shouting, according to their colours, 'Out!' or 'Not out!' Indeed, I remember a pretty little impromptu encounter with 'raw 'uns,' the combatants being adorned with blue of different hue. So acrimonious was the temper of the crowd that the Princess of Wales, who had come up to watch the game, promptly drove away, and did not, I believe, revisit the ground till a year or two ago. This was, however, to the best of my recollection, an isolated case, and 'the ring,' while taking a large and intelligent interest in the game, never interfered to interrupt proceedings or annoy the performances. Nowadays the crowd, better seated and better considered, seems to hold that it has greater privileges of expression, and I, for one, hope that some restriction will at once be placed on its methods of procedure when the course of the game is not entirely to its satisfaction.

I often wish now that I had duly noted the *voces populi* which have come under my own personal notice; they would be many and curious, even if, in some cases, hardly reproducible; but memory is a bad substitute for a notebook, and one is always in danger of reproducing as fact what one has only acquired through the medium of the comic papers. Most of the absurd remarks are naturally fathered upon ladies, though nowadays the fair sex in England, and in Australia (*teste* Ranjitsinhji), takes not only an interest, but an intelligent and scientific interest, in the game. To some cases Ovid's 'Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsæ' is, no doubt, applicable; indeed, I know a fair spectator who was bitterly disappointed when her husband secured front seats in the members' enclosure for the 'Varsity

match. She would have to watch cricket instead of fashions, poor soul! But as a rule the modern *habituée*—and there are many *habituées* at Lord's—not only knows the players and the colours they are wearing, but their positions in the field and the points of the play, so that the ancient blunder of mistaking the umpires in the Public Schools match for the two headmasters, present in the interests of order and decorum, is not likely to be repeated. If tea and frocks do in some cases interfere with a rapt attention to the game, yet there are many other cases in which the daintiest of white kid gloves are sacrificed on the altar of the applause earned by a fine hit or a brilliant catch.

Some one—I don't know who—has said that every speech (and, I presume, every article) must contain a quotation, and a story. As far as this paper goes the quotation has already been produced, and a Latin one at that; all that now remains is to find the essential story which will be *à propos* to the subject. Failing a yarn that will adequately fill the post, I may be pardoned for throwing in two or three as make-weights. They naturally group themselves, more or less, under such a heading as 'The Blunders of the Uninitiated.'

Here is a story fathered on the hapless spectator. G. G. Hearne was passing in front of the inclosure in all the glory of the dark blue cap of Kent, embroidered with the historical white horse. 'Why,' asked a lady looker-on, 'does Mr. Hearne have a white horse on his cap?' 'Why, to show that he's *G. G.* Hearne, of course!' This, if not true, is well found, to literally translate the Italian proverb.

Chaff and advice from the less sedate and ceremonious part of the ring are, of course, common. Time was when the Gloucestershire folk would not believe that W. G. could bowl though W. G. thought he could, and the first 'fourer' hit from his bowling was the signal for a yell of 'Put on Fred!'—poor G. F. Grace, of course—and when G. F. went on what a roar arose! What a popular cricketer he was! We all know by hearsay, though we didn't all see, his famous catch at the Oval, when one of Bonnor's biggest smites landed, and stayed, in that safe pair of hands. But after the applause was over, and a new man had come in, and poor Fred had gone back to his position on the edge of the ring, he received a second and unrehearsed round of applause from the spectators in his immediate neighbourhood.

The keen attention of the modern spectator is perhaps hardly fully known. I remember a match of no great importance at Basingstoke, which we won, according to the telegraph, by a single

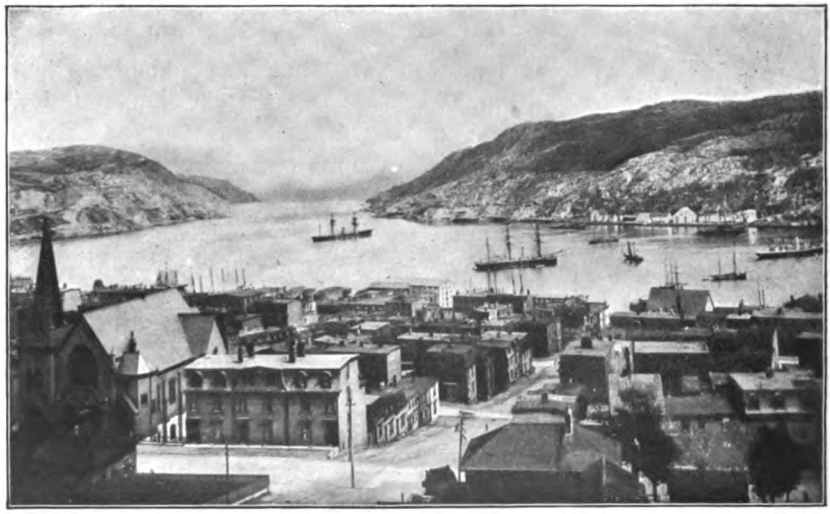
run, on further investigation we found that the scorers differed, and that one version gave the match as a tie; but an old fellow came up and produced a piece of wood, on which, after the manner of our ancestors, he had duly notched every run, and as he, a native, made out that our side of aliens was in the majority, to us the match was awarded on his ruling.

For pure fun and good-humour commend me to a North-country audience. 'Audience' is hardly the right word, but it leads up to a golf story, which is good, told of a golf-player whose tongue carried him away at times, and who, being asked by his opponent if he objected to a couple of ladies going round with them as spectators, replied, 'I don't mind spectators, but I draw the line at an audience.' To return to the North-countrymen, they take up every point of the game in a moment; they delight in a slippery ground on which the badly spiked may slip and defile his flannels; they will hoot a blunder in the field, and applaud to the skies the simplest and slowest ball that the offender stops, till by some special act of 'derring do' he has justified his existence. And they can act as well as criticise. Going out once for a little preliminary practice at Bramall Lane, I was accosted by a ragged fellow, who looked a veritable tramp, and who asked if he might bowl to me, assuring me that he could 'keep 'em straight.' And he did, too, and gave me some excellent practice. There are probably some unknown Richardsons and Molds tramping the roads to this day. Thoms could probably write a good book (why doesn't he?) of reminiscences, and his records of 'the ring' (in the cricket sense and the P. R. sense) would probably prove delightful reading. Not the worst of his 'spectator' stories refers to an incident at Liverpool, when a big hitter, who had broken two bats, called for another; on which an out-of-work 'docker,' who was watching the game with delight, bawled out, 'Bat be blowed! Tak ta beggar a tree!' One more story, this time from the Midlands, where a wandering team was playing, and being in difficulties fell back on 'sneaks.' The manœuvre puzzled the batsman for the moment, but a friend in the crowd gave him 'the tip' after a couple of balls had been bowled: 'Keep tha' spune in the 'ole, Jack! He canno hurt thee then!' Not bad advice.

HUNTING THE GREENLAND SEAL

BY ARTHUR P. SILVER

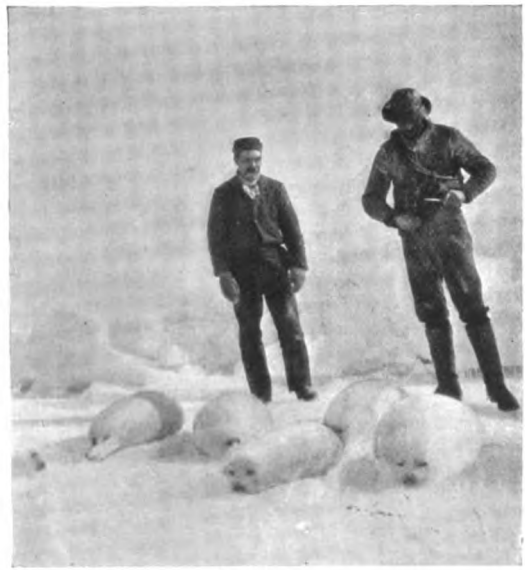
THE island of Newfoundland is full of interest, both from the dramatic events of its early history and from its hardy breed of men, who roving the inhospitable Northern seas with the daring of the ancient Vikings, possess themselves of spoils of fish and mammalian life which Nature in vain locks up for the best part



HARBOUR—ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

of the year with iron fetters of frost and ice. Her harbours—narrow gateways between desolate cliffs of rock—are supposed to have sheltered Iceland navigators as early as the year 1000. Sebastian Cabot on June 24, 1497,. before Columbus had discovered the *mainland* of America, is said to have christened the

island after the Apostle St. John. It is certain that in 1504 the Basque and Breton fishermen cast their lines on the banks of Newfoundland. Jacques Cartier in 1534 skirted the bleak and iron-bound coasts of the island, which he deemed to be 'the portion of the earth that God allotted to Cain.' In 1583 that brave sea dog Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in the name of Queen Elizabeth, took possession of the harbour of St. John's, in which he found collected thirty-six sails of different nationalities. Thence venturing forth into regions of storm and Arctic tides, the only record of his fate remaining is that 'at midnight the lights of the "Squirrel" suddenly disappeared,' a terrible gale raging, while his last message from those wild Northern seas 'We are as near heaven by sea as by land' to the consort ship the 'Golden Hind' is still ringing down the centuries.



THE YOUNG ARE APPROPRIATELY CALLED 'WHITECOATS'

Apart from historical interest there is a distinct charm in studying a part of the world where men live by waging incessant war against savage and unrelenting Nature, contending successfully against fearful odds.

'Swile hunting,' as Newfoundlanders term the annual expedition after the Greenland seal, or 'going on the ice,' is an industry peculiar to the island. With them a seal is always a 'swile,' a sealer or sealing vessel a 'swiler.'

Nature near the North Pole is constantly turning out vast quantities of ice and seals, which about the break up of the winter drift down towards the latitudes of Newfoundland, on the Arctic current.

Hence it happens that when the end of February comes vast herds of mammalian life cover the ice fields within reach of man. Their unparalleled numbers defy adequate description. Some-

times 200,000 are seen on a single ice floe 'whelping' or throwing their young, who whine and cry like babies, the most astonishing thing about it being that each mother returning to suckle her infant finds the particular hole in the ice whence she emerged among thousands exactly like it.

The young are appropriately called 'whitecoats,' being fat, downy, white little masses of blubber, with voracious appetite, growing with such incredible rapidity that at the end of fourteen days their 'pelt' (that is hide with fat attached) weighs from forty to fifty pounds. They then become articles of commerce, a

'SLOB' ICE

baby seal, from the superior quality of the oil, being valued at about $1.50 (6*s*. sterling), while an adult is worth $3.00 (12*s*. sterling). Their pursuit is almost the only means of work in winter to afford the population livelihood, and dire is the suffering when the seal harvest fails. The winters of 1894, 1895 and 1896 were disastrous, owing to extra heavy ice in vast sheets, which was piled up by gales to an incredible thickness.

Ice in all its forms is the great *bête noire* in a Newfoundlander's existence, and many quaint terms are applied to its varying forms. There is 'swish' ice, ice ground up into fine pieces; 'pans' of ice, meaning simply flat cakes; 'slob' ice, ice broken up into

rather big lumps, which is also known as 'lolly.' There are 'conkerbills,' or huge icicles. There is the mysterious 'anchor' ice, which frequently encases anchors and rocky sea bottoms and the cords of sunken nets till they resemble rushlights. Then there are the giant icebergs, and the 'growlers,' or large blocks of floating ice, drifting before the wind, melting underneath, until they occasionally lose their equilibrium and turn over with a noise like a growl. One year was significantly known as 'the year of the growlers,' from the number of fatal disasters that occurred from collisions with them.

One cannot withhold admiration from the brave hardy handfuls of men who go forth as a matter of course to an occupation

TURNS SEEMING HARDSHIPS INTO ACTUAL ENJOYMENT

fraught with such risks and toils among Arctic ice floes, where at every step they are called upon to face the most appalling dangers. Perchance a splitting ice floe may carry them miles away from their ship, or their return be rendered difficult or impossible by some blinding bewildering snowstorm. Perchance their steamship may be crushed by the 'rafting' of heavy ice, or be jammed against the iron coast by the packing of the ice, or may pierce her plates against the jagged points of a berg.

As an offset to such dangers are to be set, on the other hand, the fascinating charm of hopes of fortune's favours—too often illusive; the stir of the blood that is born of the conflict with the wild play of the elemental forces of Nature, and the rude

health engendered of the exhilarating atmosphere, which oftener than not turns seeming hardships into actual enjoyment.

Instances of overwhelming disasters are not rare. In 1897 the field ice was exceptionally heavy, and vast mountainous piles were heaped on the coasts. In that year seventy-five men who had sallied forth from the shores were suddenly overtaken by a cruel storm. Some, completely blinded, stepped off the edge of the ice into the freezing sea; many falling down in sheer exhaustion were ground to pieces by the ice driven by the gale piling on top of them. Many lost their limbs from frostbite, or were frozen to death. One man preserved his life by ripping up a still living seal and immersing hands and feet alternately in the

CREW OF THE SEALING STEAMSHIP 'MASTIFF'

warm palpitating body. Such an instance well illustrates the terrible risks to be encountered in securing the prize, which in a successful voyage is of course considerable. For in six weeks it is quite possible for a steamer to clear $50,000 (10,000*l.*), one-third of which is divided among the crew, the owners taking two-thirds of the spoil.

In above illustration we give a view of the crew of the sealing steamship 'Mastiff,' lost in the winter of 1898, among the ice floes, by the piling of ice round her on all sides, till she was completely covered over with a white shroud and quite out of sight. These men were rescued by the ss. 'Newfoundland,' from Halifax, N.S., which ship herself had a narrow

escape, having been caught for twenty-four hours in ice nearly twenty feet thick. It was on a voyage in this ship that the photographs were secured which are reproduced in this article, and the experiences here narrated obtained.

The ship carries a crew of 'boys,' as men are always called in sealing language, to the number of 220. Two of our illustrations show them at the hour of feeding on 'Solomon Goss's birthday,' as Tuesdays and Fridays are styled, the dishes being 'lobscouse' (stew), and 'bangbelly' (a sort of pudding), which they 'scoff' like hungry wolves.

While dealing with their queer dialect, one might point the attention of the philologist to their rich mine of queer antiquated folk-speech.

THE BABY SEAL

Newfoundland was early settled and much isolated from the great civilised world. Hence it is not surprising that in common use are words which are to be found in the pages of Shakespeare and Spenser, but have long since become obsolete. Of such are 'yarry' or 'yary,' for wide awake; 'leary,' for hungry; 'flaw,' for a gust of wind; 'frore,' for frozen; 'glutch,' to swallow; 'myid,' for girl; 'starve,' meaning to freeze; 'swinge,' to singe; 'dwy,' a shower; 'snite,' for snipe; 'perney,' for presently; 'brews,' for an indescribable dish of stew; 'tilt,' for a log hut; 'nunch,' for luncheon; 'costive,' for costly.

Among their more amusing terms are 'an elevener,' for a glass of grog taken at eleven o'clock, an old English term for luncheon; 'till Tibb's Eve,' meaning never or 'in the Greek Calends;' 'bigamous,' for bigoted; and 'anti-christ'-coal, for anthracite.

Names distinguishing the various kinds and stages of seals are simply bewildering. When one year old the baby seal is known as 'a jar,' then he becomes 'a doter.' In his third year, developing leopard-like spots, he is known as 'a ranger.' A

Greenland seal about eighteen months old is contemptuously styled 'a bedlamer,' being at that age of little value. Then there are 'hoods,' 'harps,' 'cats,' and 'dogheads.'

The word 'swatching' reminds one of the jabberwocky dialect of 'Alice in Wonderland,' for it is compounded of the two words 'seal watching,' just as 'slythy' is formed by the compression of the two words into one of 'slimy' and 'lithe,' meaning smooth and active.

Returning to our ship from this digression, first of all a description of her peculiar construction to meet her exceptional requirements is called for.

THE BOW IS OF PECULIAR CONSTRUCTION

The prow has rather a sloping angle, so as to allow the vessel to rise on top of the ice, and by her sheer weight break down into the water. The bow is of peculiar construction also, in that it is fortified with blocks and beams of solid oak, making a kind of battering ram to allow of charging through field ice. When a clear space is reached in an ice floe she can back as far as possible, and then rush full steam ahead with tremendous effect.

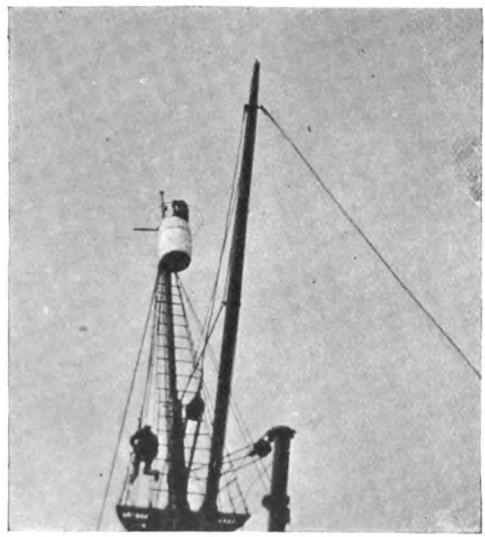
Every sealing steamer carries 'a crow's nest' lashed to the after-side of the topmast, a foot or two below the masthead. The 'crow's nest' is simply an empty cask intended to shelter the man who is on the look out after seal with a powerful

telescope. It is approached by a rope ladder lashed to the top-mast back-stays.

Each steamer carries boats sharp at each end like an ordinary whale boat. They are painted white in order to assimilate them to the colour of the ice, and thus enable them to approach the herd without attracting much attention.

The law prohibits a start for sailing ships till March 9; for steamships till after midnight of March 11, in order to allow the young seal or 'white coats' to attain a fair size.

It is sometimes a stirring scene to witness the midnight departure of a sealing steamer, cutting her way out of some ice-bound fiord. The dancing Northern lights and blazing constellations look down upon an excited crowd of humanity of rough exterior, but of heroic heart, clearing away the imprisoning ice with dynamite, axes and saws, to set free their ship to venture forth upon the Arctic seas, to plunge perhaps into a howling tempest, and to face the Northern winter undismayed. Amid the glare of torches women shout their farewells, in no delicate voices to be sure, but heartfelt and sincere, the excited crews swarm on the ice, swearing worse than the troops in Flanders, but going forth cheerfully all the same to win bread for their families. Such men are cast in the same mould as the makers of Greater Britain, yet there are those who claim that the human race is decayed and degenerated.



THE CROW 'S NEST

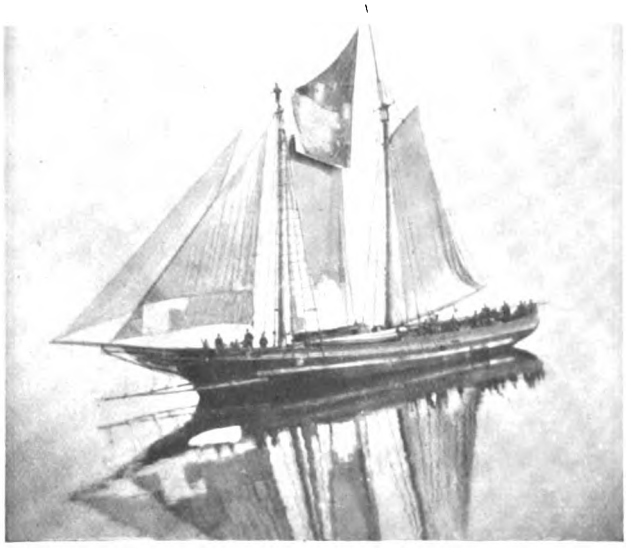
As the ship leaves behind the grim coasts of Newfoundland, the desolate grandeur of the scene may be described as awful. There are bluff high rocks clothed with no clinging shrubbery; bleak cliffs capped with snow cut out in cold outline against the leaden Northern sky. In many cases the base of the cliffs is bored into huge caverns, into which the dark waves dash themselves

with a dull, heavy roar like thunder, sending up huge columns of white spray from some aperture, far inland, upwards of a hundred feet in the air. One is reminded of Tennyson's picture of:

> An iron coast and angry waves,
> You seemed to hear them climb and fall
> And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
> Beneath the windy wall.

Sometimes a strange foreign-looking craft is passed, or a sailing ship becalmed, drifting idly on the tide.

After twenty hours of clear water, the ship with whose progress I am specially dealing encountered field ice, not too



DRIFTING IDLY ON THE TIDE

thick at first to impede her progress, but gradually becoming formidable. Still she ploughed her way through it, and with a stiff gale howling through her rigging it was odd to walk the deck of a perfectly steady ship. Here and there were rents in the ice sometimes affording a strip of clear water a hundred yards in width. A snowstorm came on just as she emerged from the ice floe. Speed was slackened, while peering through rifts in the blinding sheets of snow one saw the ghost-like forms of giant icebergs, contact with which meant instant destruction.

Another vast ice floe was encountered and slowly pierced, the ship heading towards the Newfoundland Banks.

At last countless moving specks upon an ice field of clear miles of luminous white spread intense excitement among all hands. The vessel, straining in every plate, is forced through the ice as far as possible towards the pack of seals. When she brings up hard on the ice the 'boys' jump off, their eyes wild with delight, and the deadly slaughter begins. Each man is armed with a 'club'—that is, a pole or gaff—having a hook at one end and shod with iron at the other. A blow on the nose with this weapon quickly kills a seal.

Sometimes the quarry is shot, but 'clubbing' is the quickest method, and in this way 25,000 have sometimes been killed in a single day.

SCULPING

'Sculping' is the next process after killing, which means rapidly detaching the skin by means of a scalping-knife with all the fat or blubber adhering to it. This operation scarcely takes a minute. The seal is thrown on its back, ripped from chin to tail. The 'pelts' are then rolled into bundles, each man dragging six to the ship, called his 'tow.' The bodies are left on the ice.

When the ship reaches port the skins are separated from the fat and salted for export to Great Britain, where they are converted into leather. They are also used for soldiers' winter caps, and of late years furriers have begun to treat the skin, so that it appears in ladies' cloaks and capes. The fat was formerly thrown into huge vats, where the heat of the sun extricated the oil and incidentally generated a smell that grew with the days and became a stink which poisoned heaven, being borne out to

sea an incredible distance. By an improved process the fat is now ground by machinery and then steamed, so that Newfoundland is in danger of losing her pre-eminence for 'an ancient and fish-like smell.' Unsavoury as the oil is in a raw state, it yet forms the main ingredient of some of the finer kinds of scented soap.

It is no wonder that the smell of slaughter attracts huge sharks. Our illustration shows a monster fifteen feet in length that has just been dragged on the ice by means of gaffs and boat-hooks.

Although some 'hoods' are killed, the most important seals are the Greenland, or 'harps.' These animals are not provided with the dense soft under-fur like velvet of the Alaska seals, but are valued chiefly for the oil they yield, and their skins, which are

EACH MAN DRAGGING SIX TO THE SHIP

converted into leather. They come down to the immense ice-fields off the coasts to bring forth their young. If not molested they remain on the ice floes till the middle of April, when they take to the water and begin their migrations northwards.

Although the young are snowy white at first, they afterwards become spotted like a leopard, with curved lines of dark spots on the back, somewhat resembling an ancient harp, whence their name is derived.

The 'hood,' which owes his name to a bag or hood which he can inflate at pleasure for protection, is much larger than the harp. He shows magnificent courage in defending himself, fighting with teeth and flippers, and when he blows out his

bladder-shaped and shot-proof excrescence is simply invulnerable about the head. He has been known to stand up manfully against a polar bear, but of course is finally defeated.

The 'harps' are timid, inoffensive animals, but the old males are often found covered with wounds from fierce battles. Yet they do not fight furiously like the bulls of the fur seals, who make a fierce noise, 'so that night and day the aggregated sound from a herd is like that of an approaching railway train.' The females are always unmindful of danger in shielding their young from attack, and will bite savagely and fight fiercely in their

A MONSTER FIFTEEN FEET IN LENGTH

defence, although by Nature most inoffensive animals, easily tamed and even turned into pets.

It is amusing to see a seal 'hustling' to escape pursuit. The hinder limbs are always kept passive with the soles of the feet applied to each other, but the fore limbs are worked alternately; the body takes on a wriggling action, and a succession of short, jerky jumps is made, at the rate of a fast walk for a man.

A whole volume might be devoted to the curious and interesting facts to be gleaned about these animals. The assaults and depredations of man will doubtless eventually drive them into the Arctic zone, where they may not survive their sterner environ-

ment at 'whelping' time. This has happened to the walrus, which like a huge aquatic bear has, however, proved indifferent to the savageness of Arctic environment. The great auk and now the Arctic curlew are instances of failure to adapt life to altered and more severe conditions, from being driven ever northward by the devastating pursuit of man.

What the buffalo was to the Indian of the prairie, what the reindeer is to the Lapp, the Greenland seal is to the whole nation of the Eskimo. The seal comes in for nearly every purpose of their narrow life. Its blubber is their sole support in winter.

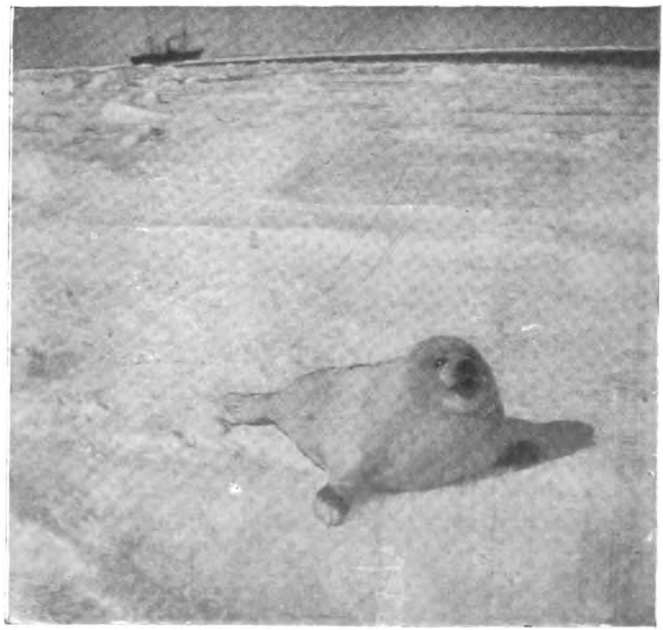
THE YOUNG ARE SNOWY WHITE AT FIRST

Its skin gives them their 'kyak' and larger boats. From it they construct their clothing, the leather for their dog harness, their boots, their caps. Their only light during the long winter is derived from the oil, while the transparent skin of the bowels does duty for a transparency instead of glass.

As the steamship turned homewards towards port, those to whom this voyage was a first essay felt that they had passed through experiences never to be erased from their memories, even in other far different scenes. Memories of the dark Northern seas, the ice floes, silent save when some weird boom like the bass note of an organ shook them to their centres, and of the rich gifts

which the Arctic tides bear down from the frozen North within reach of man—not to be won save by daring and courage and the highest qualities of physical manhood.

Sealing in Newfoundland wears another aspect besides that of a means of bread-winning. It has become a national pastime, a grand annual carnival—breaking up the dull monotony of the winter months—almost the sole subject of interest and conversation for weeks before and after the voyage. Every arrival in port is closely questioned for news of the absent fleet, and from



'HUSTLING'

every jutting headland of rock the telescope sweeps the illimitable glistening fields of drifting ice for a chance view of some straggler. The greatest anxiety sometimes exists in the ports of departure when storms and high winds are prevalent and distressing rumours are in the air.

Crowds assemble to witness the departure of the sealing fleet from St. John's harbour. Pools are formed in every counting house on the earliest arrival home, and the first 'skipper' who steams in triumphantly with his rich cargo occupies a position that may be likened to that of the winner of the Derby.

THE BRITISH AVIARY

BY ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

NATURE has given us in the British Isles the noblest aviary in the world. We always pity the captives in prisons of wire—unspeakably miserable, unless they have been bred in confinement. There is no more melancholy spectacle than the caged eagle moping on his perch, or the skylark fluttering feebly on his sod of turf, and seeking in vain to console himself with a dirge in his cramped quarters on a ground floor. The owl seems to take matters more philosophically, because we only see him in the daytime, when it is his habit to blink and doze. But it is certain that no brain-worn philosopher has more restless nights, when in a state of nature he ought to be sailing softly over the stubbles, and foraging for himself among the field mice. We might multiply examples of the inhumanity of putting heredity in fetters. Science must of course have reasonable scope, and we have nothing to say against the ornithological department of the Zoological Gardens. But we can see no plausible reason for maintaining private aviaries for free-born British birds, or for the foreigners who come annually to ask us for hospitality. Some of the captives take more kindly to captivity than others; but the aviary is apt to degenerate into an asylum, where the patients are

the victims of melancholia. There is something to be said for the country-bred cobbler or sempstress who keeps a lark or linnet for company, and to revive the old rural associations. But for anyone with legs or leisure, the whole of our island is an aviary, from the Shetlands to Spitalfields and on to the South Downs. All the scenes, from the roosts and voes of the Northern Archipelago to the cab-ranks in the town, or the shipping wharves on the Coasts, are animated with feathered life and resonant of song or bird-sounds. Wherever he takes his walks abroad, the lover of Nature need never want an object. Even in rambles about London and its suburbs there need be no lack of interest, as Mr. Hudson has demonstrated lately in a delightful book. Nowhere are the birds so absolutely undisturbed; the only risk they run is from the prowling cats, and, though these may stalk in the shrubberies of the squares, they dare not show among pedestrians on the pavements. So the sparrow, which is everywhere the type of 'cheek,' develops in London a portentous amount of cool impudence, and, like Dickens's family of cellar-bred fowls, shows duck-like indifference to the wheels and the horse-hoofs. So with the pigeons, tame as those of St. Mark, who, taking interminable leaseholds, increase and multiply under the porticos of St. Paul's and the Museum, or any other comfortable coign of vantage. There are still cawing rooks in Gray's Inn Gardens, and never in solitudes are the wood-pigeons so confiding as those under the safeguard of the keepers of the Parks. Not a few of our native songsters frequent the groves of Kensington, secure from the bird-nesting boys who can only look and long. The builder and the railway contractor have made wild work in the southern environs —a generation ago a favourite camping-ground of the gypsies. Then black-cap, white-throat, and willow-warbler skulked in the matted thickets, when the leaf-fall in the early frosts was thick as in Vallombrosa. But happily the nightingale, the sweetest singer of our foreign friends, seems to have no sort of objection to bricks and stucco. On the contrary, like some star of the stage, he loves an appreciative audience, and seldom serenades his mate with more fire than when within call of a cab-stand. The early clerk hurrying stationwards to catch the train sees the water-wagtail jauntily jerking his tail on the scrap of dewy lawn, and may hear the song of the thrush or the scream of the nervous blackbird, as he skirts the old-fashioned gardens of Dulwich or Sydenham, fragrant with their lime blossoms in the freshness of the morning.

Take it all round, we may safely say that there is no country

for birds like Britain. It is true we miss the ostrich and the albatross, the parrot tribe, the humming birds, and those half-winged Australasian eccentricities that cannot travel, and *pour cause*. But it is the meeting-place of infinitely more migrants than any spot or centre of similar extent. Nor can we wonder, for, so long as they are totally indifferent to climate, there are localities to suit every taste. There are the wild moors of the Highlands and West Ireland for the birds that love solitude and a free range. There are the downs and broad, breezy commons, sprinkled thickly with gorse patches, for those that affect more cheery scenes. Sea-birds of all sorts swarm naturally to the land, with the endless creeks and sea-lochs that sheltered the galleys of the Northern rovers. It is girt with sheer cliffs and desolate sand-islands, which invite gulls and aquatic birds to settle in their countless myriads. It is intersected by rivers and brooks, alive with troutlets and minnows. Everywhere it is rich in cover and rich in food. The shores are strewn with shell-fish, the bushes are laden with berries; and throughout the lowlands the farmer or gardener is industriously providing for their wants. Instinct has settled all the arrangements in prehistoric times. But suppose a song-bird of the present day, miraculously gifted with sound geographical knowledge, deciding on his own summer plans. There could be scarcely room for hesitation. He would never dream of the great Continental forests, with little undergrowth save the rank beds of bracken or bilberry, or of torrid and treeless Spain, or of sun-scorched Italy, when all the good of the land of England lay before him. Thick copses everywhere, and matted hedgerows; banks fragrant in the spring with the flowering broom or furze; swamp-surrounded pools, with the dense willow and alder-beds, and water for domestic purposes and the morning bath everywhere within easy reach. Nesting must always be a somewhat anxious business, but nowhere is so rare a choice of safe and eligible situations. And on the whole, on these coasts, the perils from birds of prey are reduced pretty nearly to nothing worth consideration.

If birds intercommunicate, as there can be small doubt that they do, how much must be told in this meeting-place of migrants! What endless topics for discussion at geographical gatherings between Arctic explorers and visitors from the far South! It is true that some come to nest, whereas others leave for the nesting; but the seasons cross and overlap. All have experienced more startling shiftings of scene than any fashionable amateur of globe-trotting travel in his steam yacht. The cuckoo, who has

been wintering on the banks of the Zambesi, turns up tolerably punctually towards the middle of April to renew his monotonous note in our hedgerows. Travelling, as it is presumed, chiefly by land, he does not waste time on the passage. Like many idle folk, he has always an air of intense preoccupation, as if time were far too precious to be wasted. The swallow, that yesterday was hunting flies under the date-palms of the Soudan, travelling more swiftly, yet without sextant or compass, shoots straight as an arrow to the old nest under the eaves of the Kentish homestead, to skim the horse-pond among the season's ducklings and resume his pursuit of English entomology. When some are coming, others are going. There are the hardy birds that prefer to breed in the safety and abundance of the Siberian tundras. The first heats of the brief but blazing summer have thawed the snows that buried the ripe fruits of last autumn. Mosquitoes are 'in,' and in in clouds for those that prefer animal to vegetable diet. That northern trip is undertaken for the nesting, which is quickly and safely despatched. The Samoyedes, who take life seriously, are not addicted to nest-harrying. So soon as the nesting is over, the birds hurry back with their broods, and small blame to them. There winter treads hard on the heels of the summer, and is ever apt to take time by the forelock. Then come the whirling flights in moonlight, in storm, and in darkness, dashing themselves like bewildered moths against the lights of Heligoland, in scenes described so picturesquely by Seebohm and Cornish. Indifferent as they may be to gales and cold, they must be glad to find themselves again in more hospitable regions. We dare to say they regard with semi-barbarous contempt the sensuous winter denizens of sultry latitudes. But we always fancy we recognise a note of jubilation in the cry of the skeins of wild geese as they come streaming south from Labrador or Rupert's Land; as we are sure there is a shout of triumph in the trumpeting of the swans when they stoop to moorings in some land-locked Scottish estuary, before taking flight for their feeding-grounds in the lochs of the uplands.

The birds in the aviary group themselves in localities, according to their habits and idiosyncrasies. There are the marauding freebooters that range over wastes and solitudes and naturally shun the presence of man, since everywhere they are put to the ban, shot down and gibbeted. There are birds of ill omen, whose sinister cry is supposed to predict death or misfortune. There are birds doomed to ill-luck and fatal misapprehension, like the kestrel, the owl, and the harmless nightjar, that suffer for simi-

larity of dress or flight, or for the imputed crimes of mischievous neighbours. So there are birds who have been hatched out under a happy star and safe beneath the ægis of song, sentiment, and tradition, presume upon the liberties they may take with mankind. What boy ever robs a swallow's nest? We have known the martins breed year after year in the porch of a cottage, where the inmates had to stoop to avoid harming the nest. The robin enjoys almost equal immunity, and, as Mrs. Gamp would have said, well he knows it. Never did kindly action bear more permanent fruit than that of the robins that paid the last offices to the babes in the wood. And the tiny wren, wedded to the robin in the romance of nursery minstrelsy, is just as secure.

> Robinets and jenny wrens
> Are God Almighty's cocks and hens,

says the old country rhyme, and many a living schoolboy has laid it to heart who is sadly forgetful of his hymns. The robin is almost as omnipresent as the sparrow, though he shows singly or by pairs and never in flocks. We have seldom sat down to an *al-fresco* luncheon in the woods, that he did not come hopping, with head over his shoulder, to claim his share of the crumbs; and when you begin ministering to the destitute in winter frosts it is the robin, plump and red-breasted as a beadle, who puts himself forward as a sort of master of the ceremonies to see to the other birds when he is satisfied himself.

As for the feathered freebooters, they may be classified like human bipeds. There are the daring rievers of the wastes—the eagles and the falcon tribes—ever ready, like the old border riders, to lift anything that is not too hot or too heavy. There are the great robber gulls, who blackmail their feebler neighbours and gorge themselves through the livelong day on the spoils of more persevering fishers. Literally, they never stoop to a plunge on their own account, so long as there are smaller gulls to be plundered. For there be water thieves as well as land thieves, and among the latter the hooded and carrion crows play the parts of the sneaking footpad. They will kill on occasion, like the raven, when opportunity offers, and are ever ready to hasten the end of a moribund. Then there are the burglars and thieves, the magpies and the jackdaws, who, though they may be tempted on occasion to chicken-murder, are seldom guilty of anything worse than petty larceny. The magpie, as we know, is an inveterate pilferer, but, unless when demoralised by education and association with man, he seldom steals what he cannot turn to use. We

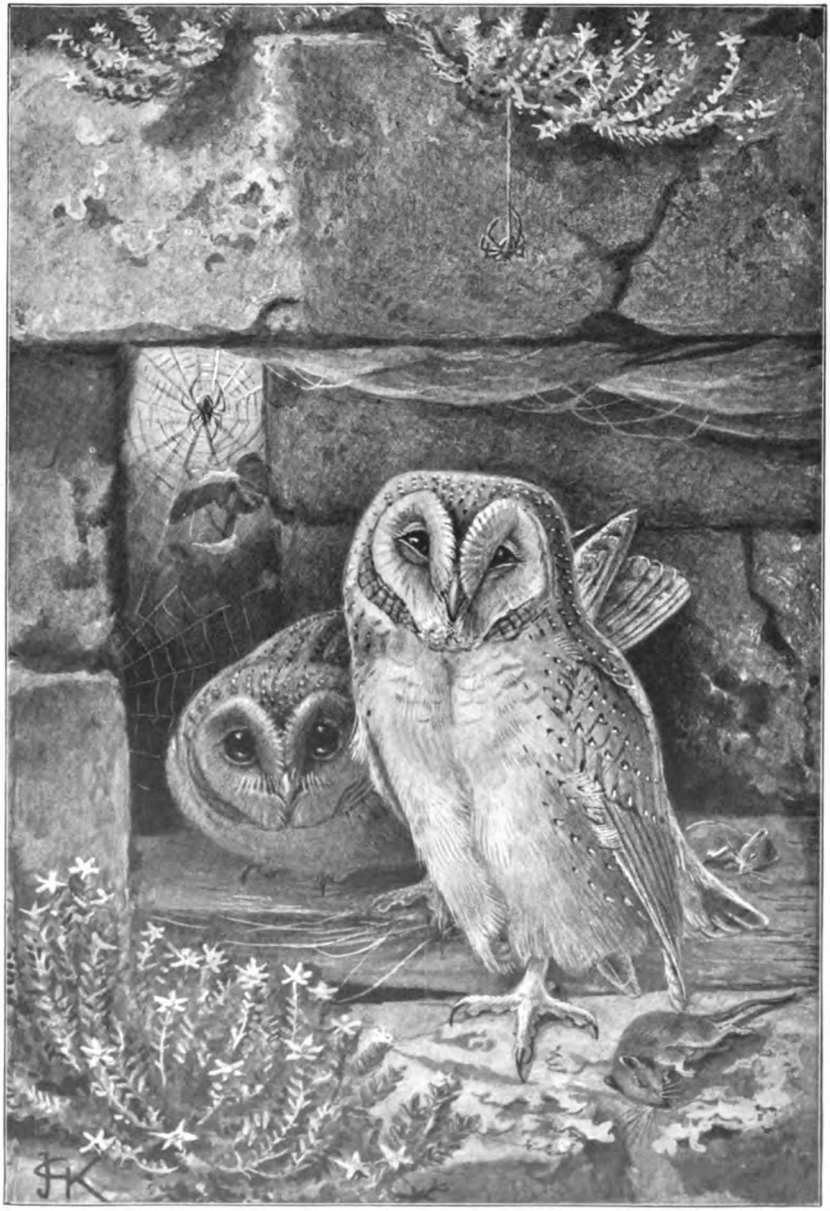
BURGLARS AND THIEVES

are aware that that may be disputed, but we must remember his peculiar architectural genius. He builds on an extravagant scale, with all manner of materials—by the way, he is the only one of the bigger birds who troubles to roof himself in—and he sticks to a permanent residence which he is always altering or enlarging. The *débris* after demolition of a magpie's nest is miscellaneous as the contents of an eagle's larder. The jackdaw, being far more familiar in his habits, is a more audacious and obnoxious purloiner. But the daw, unlike the pie, is a confirmed kleptomaniac. The counsel who defended his delinquencies at the bar would have no difficulty in showing that he stole from sheer cussedness. He has a fancy for the jewels that glitter, but he steals to hide them away. He has no personal use for the tea-spoons which he collects, like the connoisseurs who fill cabinets with coins, only to neglect them.

And the jackdaw, and notably that historical jackdaw who was excommunicated with book, bell, and candle, by the Bishop of Rheims, reminds us of his rather discreditable association with the Church. Birds, as we said, group themselves by associations as well as localities, and a notable and picturesque group is that of the ecclesiastical birds. Of these, the jackdaw is most inseparably connected with the cathedral. Think of any venerable Gothic edifice abroad, from Cologne to St. Stephen's, from Laon to Toledo, and among the most abiding of the impressions are the clamorous daws, who have nested from time immemorial in the towers and looked down cynically upon the clergy from their perches on the pinnacles. Always ready to adapt themselves to circumstances, they make themselves as happy at Antwerp, where encroaching houses or hovels run up to the very buttresses, as in any half-deserted city of the dead. But where they are to be seen in the height of their glory is in the semi-rural English Cathedral Close. Among all the convulsions and innovations of our Church, the birds who frequent the cloistered precincts are the veritable perpetuators of traditions of the past. They have looked down indifferently on Papist and Puritan, on pilgrim and iconoclast, always true to the old Conservative ideas of the days of à Becket, Lanfranc, or St. Augustine. It is a strange coincidence that their gait and dress should be so eminently sympathetic with their surroundings. They have never gone in for Ritualism or vestments; they stick to the simplicity of the Primitive Church. All are attired in sober black, like the rooks, who, as they sit swinging on the topmost branches in a breeze, remind you of grave dignitaries in the stalls, nodding over the

choral service and the sermon. The consciences of the rooks can be by no means clear of offence; as for the more mercurial jackdaws, they are thieves by habit and repute; and, regarding both rook and daw in a moral aspect, we are reminded of the days when all manner of disreputable characters sought sanctuary in the Cathedral precincts. But, picturesquely, they fall in as harmoniously with the grey solemnity of the sublime old pile as if they were outlined against a moonlit sky in the leafless boughs of some winter landscape by Corot.

Then there are the birds that specially affect the village church. These are grey churches, low but massive, built seemingly for all eternity, which chime in with the quiet and scantily peopled solitudes around them. Thither owls belonging to the most ancient families in England may have flitted when the Saxons were giving place to the Normans. As feudal fortalices have been replaced by Tudor manor-houses, these owls may have shifted their quarters in Plantagenet times. They are settled now in the lofts above the bells, and below the stone slabs encrusted with lichens and stone-crop. There they doze and blink and snore through the day, among unobtrusive bats hung peaceably up by the hind claws and tapestries of immemorial cobwebs, tenanted by bloated spiders. Towards nightfall they sail out into the deepening shadows, gliding ghost-like over the graves into the fields and closes around the rickyards of the homestead. No doubt the silence of their flight on pinions of velvet has associated them with superstitions and the world of shadows. They are sombre of aspect and solemn of gait, nevertheless the poet never made a greater mistake than when he sung of the moping and melancholy owl. Of course the owl mopes like other slumberous mortals when the poet was most likely to see him. But if we may venture on a bull, we should like to ask the defunct mice their deliberate opinion of him. When off duty and chuckling over the success of a good night's sport his wild and rather weird-like shrieks of laughter echo far and wide over hill and dale. You may not fall into his peculiar vein, but it is clear he is enjoying himself thoroughly in his own fashion. We say again, Ask the mice. With ears alert for the faintest sound, with the luminous eyes casting searchlight through the darkness, he is down upon mousie like a hammer at the slightest tremor of the grass or stubble. Peaceable if you only leave him alone, we do not envy the creeping boy who intrudes on his gloomy privacy. He will see the blackness of the loft illuminated by the yellow flashes of angry eyes; he will hear a hissing and spitting and



THEY ARE SETTLED BELOW THE STONE SLABS ENCRUSTED WITH LICHENS AND STONE-CROP

gnashing of sharp beaks, and, should he still try to make prize of the nestlings, he will need no little sticking-plaster for the bleeding fingers. Then there are the starlings, whose subdued brilliancy of plumage seldom receives the admiration it deserves. They are very gregarious, very omnivorous, and seldom at any season of the year are they to be found far from the chimneys where they have settled. Nor must we forget the great black swifts—no swallows, though so closely resembling swallows—now circling at dizzy heights above the steeple, now skimming and dipping in the nearest pool, in fleet pursuit of the flies that rise and fall with the temperature.

It is a far cry from South Downs or Midlands to Applecross or Lochaber. You leave the scenes of immemorial civilisation, where birds and men have, for long, been on a tolerably familiar footing, for moors and mountains that can never be reclaimed. Once they were the secure retreats of predatory savages; now they are given over to deer and grouse, and guarded, so far as is possible, from intrusion. The men have become law-abiding or else they have emigrated. But the birds are true to their old predatory habits, and, so long as they are not stalked or pursued, may perpetuate their breeds in inaccessible fastnesses. Not long ago it seemed that the eagle would disappear like the bustard. Now under the protection of keepers, reluctantly obeying orders, he begins to raise his head again, and ranges far and wide in his foraging. Picturesque object as he is, he is no favourite with the sheep farmers. Many a lamb, more or less weakly, is borne off in his talons. But in reality, now he does but little harm, thanks to the multiplication of the Alpine hares. The more of these he kills the better, for nothing seems to keep down their numbers. Of course he takes some toll of the red grouse and ptarmigan, though even the 'eagle eye' is baffled by the latter bird, so closely does the pencilled plumage shade into the lichens on the rocks. But the eagle, when sharp-set—and he gorges like any rattlesnake—is far from fastidious. The king of the birds is the chief of the scavengers. On the deer, or the drowned sheep, or the pony 'smoored in the moss' he will gorge himself to repletion. It is curious to mark the course of the proceedings at one of these *al-fresco* Highland banquets. Eagles are rare, ravens are not very common, but hooded crows and carrion crows, with scent even keener than their sight, are swarming and scouting. One of them sees or smells the moribund or the carrion, and would gladly keep his good thing to himself, but that is impossible. Many a pair of watchful eyes is marking his every

movement. In a few minutes the dinner-table is inconveniently crowded. Next the slow flutter of heavier wings gives warning to the crows to make room for the ravens. Soon all are busily at work again, carving away with beak and forked claws, when there is a mighty rushing sound in the air and a sudden darkening of the sunlight. As the eagle drops the others scatter, to form up in a circle at respectful distance, where they wait the good pleasure of His Majesty till, perhaps, impatience gets the better of fear. These ravens, living in pairs, and loving to keep an ample range of hunting-grounds to themselves, cling to localities like the rooks, and stick to their habitations like the starlings. They seldom rebuild till the house tumbles to pieces, and are looking after repairs, even in the winter. And as the raven reminds one of a sexton or undertaker, so those hooded crows, with their sinister masks of grey feathers, are the very antitypes of the ruthless highwaymen who used to infest the heaths of Bagshot or Hounslow.

If the hills and morasses had no tenants but these, the gloom of the grandeur would be more than depressing. The crows and ravens associate themselves naturally with sin and death, but they only croak a melancholy *in memoriam* amid a joyous chorus of life and gaiety. The grouse is *par excellence* the bird of the heather, and we know nothing in Nature more cheery than his cry when, rising from the dew spangles on the blooming heather, he stretches his pinions for the morning flight. Nothing is prettier than to see his matronly mate leading out the young family that has just chipped the shells to the strip of heathery turf on the brink of the burn, where the brood of the wild duck is bobbing in the stream. We may well take patriotic pride in the red grouse, for he is perhaps the only bird which is an absolute speciality of our islands. He is to be found here and nowhere else, though more or less plausible imitations, far less satisfactory for sporting purposes, are widely distributed. And wherever the red grouse is to be found, there you may surely look for the ring ousel. He comes in April, often in great flocks, and he goes early, for, though a bird of the moors, he is decidedly delicate. But through spring and far into the summer you hear his sweet if somewhat monotonous song; and in the family of the thrushes there is no mistaking him, for, like the warlike Turk, he bears the white badge of a crescent on his swarthy bosom. He always resents intrusion on his haunts, and sometimes expresses it like the running down of the works of an alarum clock. We say nothing of the osprey, also a migrant with a power of pinion like that of the albatross, because

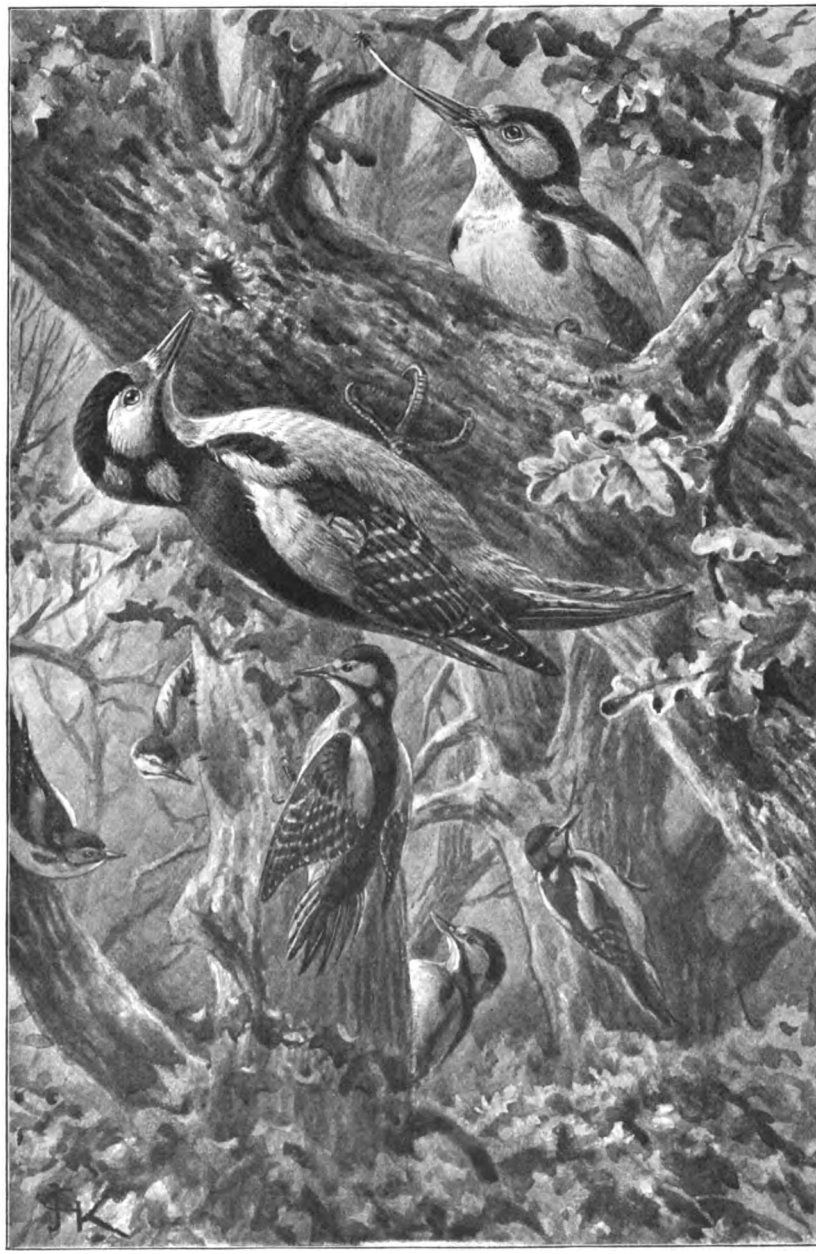
unfortunately he becomes extremely rare. With all our admiration of Frederick St. John, we have never forgiven him for ambushing these fast-vanishing fishing eagles at their breeding obelisks on the lone lakelets of Sutherland. Nor of the peregrine, the noblest and most graceful of the falcons, because now for the most part he is to be sought rather on the coast cliffs than in the moorlands of the interior.

The birds of the mosses, the commons, and the waters link the wastes of the north to the extreme lowlands. The plovers are a much persecuted tribe, though happily they know pretty well how to take care of themselves. Nothing is more charming than a flight of golden plover on the hills, circling scimitar-like with flashing blade between the purple heather and the blaze of the sunshine. Like the gulls, they often fall victims to the amiable weakness which makes them stoop with plaintive screams of lamentation over the body of a fallen friend. The epicure is much in love with them, and *pour cause*; but the attachment is more fatal to their cousins the lapwings, who are far from being such good eating. Plovers' eggs may be an overrated as they are an unwholesome delicacy, but since they came into fashion the hunt for them has been incessant. Consequently, the colonies have been broken up in which the birds used to breed like the black-headed gulls; their loss has been our gain. For now the birds have scattered over the fallows everywhere, and the egg-taking is a harder and less lucrative calling. So much the worse for the black-headed gulls and the rooks, for 'plovers' eggs' must be sent to market on any terms. The lapwing is versed in all manner of wiles, and, although taking no precaution to conceal her eggs, she is the most accomplished of feathered actors. As she flutters away with an apparently broken wing, you fancy each minute you can drop your hand on her. Moreover, she is the most fussy of all fowls, and her clamorous attentions are irritating, even when you have no particular desire to elude observation. She is the most effective of watchers in warning off night poachers, and to this day the shepherds on the southern Scottish moorlands never spare her nest or consider her feelings in their revenge for her betrayal of the persecuted hill folk. The curlew (*Scotticè*, whaup), shyer in its habits, is another bird whose plaintive whistle chimes in with the sad loneliness of the moors. A southerly congener—though no kinsman—haunting the breezy commons and the skirts of the scattering fir woods, is the night-jar. Called indifferently the fern owl, the churn owl, or the goatsucker, with his plurality of aliases, he is the victim of suspicion, superstition, and deceptive

appearances. Coming in May and going in September, he is never to be seen abroad before nightfall. The most harmless of feathered creatures, he has a somewhat truculent look; the keepers used remorselessly to shoot him down with the hawks and the owls. In reality, he hawks nothing but moths and winged beetles, but though the rustics may have ceased to believe in his goat-milking, they still consider him spectral and uncanny.

In our wanderings along the lowland streams we come everywhere on the lively dipper, who builds in the hollows of the bank or the clefts of some mossy rock. The dipper loves to dip and skim on sparkling and flashing water, whereas the brilliant kingfisher is as often to be found on the sluggish streamlet in the shadows of overhanging trees, where his gay colours, where by chance they catch the sunbeams, lend a lustre to the pervading gloom. But for romantic and adventurous bird-nesting in the season, give us the dark pools and the solitary swamps in neglected woods, where sedges flourishing in rank luxuriance mingle with the alder beds or interlace with the matted undergrowth of untrodden copses. Vociferous they may be in the morning and at eve, but at noonday, is the oppression of a brooding stillness, broken only by the croak of the frog, or at rarer intervals by the indescribable cry of the water-rail. There those water-rails have built their exceedingly damp homes on piles, like the amphibious burghers of Amsterdam. The nest is surrounded by weeded moat and treacherous reed-bank, for if you trust your foot off the projecting bough or the tuft of rushes promising tolerable safety, you are submerged as if you had taken an alligator for a cedar log in the horrors of the Dismal Swamp. And tiny birdlings have taken advantage of the sanctuary; the willow wrens and the reed birds of many species are swarming in the dwarf copses and among the sedges, with blackbirds, thrushes, and even nightingales, for all these birds delight in the water.

From that damp-laden atmosphere, with the clouds of hard-biting midges and the slimy crawling things somewhat kept down by the birds, it is pleasant to struggle on to solid ground again and to emerge in the open woods. We have already alluded to some of their more formidable tenants—the hawks, the crows, and the magpies. Perhaps peril from these is partly the reason that the great woods are rather shunned by the smaller singing birds, at least in country where they can find cover in luxuriant hedgerows. But there are the woodpeckers tapping industriously into the dusk, like so many busy carpenters working hard overtime; and there are the titmice, who seem to have found the secret



TAPPING LIKE BUSY CARPENTERS WORKING HARD OVER-TIME

of perpetual motion, swinging themselves from twig to twig by beak and prehensile claw. Next to the acclimated cock pheasant, the brightest ornament of our woods is the jay. But while the pheasant struts in airy confidence, the jay with good reason is the incarnation of shyness. No keeper can miss a chance of a shot at him. But though often shot at, he often escapes, for he has a subtle habit of skimming through the undergrowth, and it is but seldom you see his plumage glinting in the sun. As for the woodpigeons, they have been greatly multiplying of late, to the farmers' sorrow, and everywhere you may hear the soft melancholy of their cooing, always abruptly broken off. A greater contrast to the shrill scream of the jay—which Tennyson calls its sudden laughter—can scarcely be imagined.

It is still fresher in the open fields, where you hear the partridges calling. But as the cuckoo is the vagrant haunting the hedgerows, the birds we always specially associate with English fields are the lark and the landrail. Both are migrants, although many of the former stay with us all the year round. The lark is dear to the poets; both are favourites of the *gourmet*, The lark, next to the nightingale and the blackcap, is the sweetest of singers, and though, in the words of Christopher North, we should be sorry to set such delightful songsters by the ears, not a few of us would incline to give the lark the preference. It is a question between Italian and native music; between the English ballad and the roulades of the opera. But when the lark soars aloft, the landrail skulks, and his voice is more aggressively discordant than that of the jay. His name of corn-crake hits it off to a nicety. Happily for himself, he is thoroughly pleased with it. He never loses an hour in letting you know of his advent, and thenceforward he is always rasping out his discordant solos *in crescente*, from the meadow hay and the shooting wheatlands. But though he parades what he seems to consider a song, he modestly conceals his person; it is not easy to put him up at all; it is next to impossible to flush him a second time. Yet his self-confidence on occasions surpasses that of the pampered cock pheasant, and St. John says he has seen him standing up within a few yards screeching his matins from between the fore legs of the ruminating cow.

As the lark and the rail associate themselves with the fields, so we always connect the linnet and the wheatear with the fresher freedom of the Downs. Yet the larks, of course, are there in plenty, especially when mustering for the autumn flitting. But the linnets, with their congeners and the families

of the finches, swarm in these fragrant thickets of the golden gorse, and the linnets keep it up in the terrestrial choir, while the larks are chanting litanies half-way towards the seraphim. The incense of that solemn yet cheery service is the fragrance of the wild thyme and of the gorse. As for the wheatears, they are among the first of the arrivals from foreign shores, and are ever welcome to the poulterers and their purveyors, though somehow they are less in favour than of yore. Their objection to rain sends them hurrying to shelter, makes them an easy prey to simple turf traps and hair nooses. There are so many of them at certain seasons that the victims can easily be spared, and their flitting forms and conspicuous white rumps give a gay touch of life to the sobriety of the shadowy roll of the South Downs.

Finally, we may glance at the sea-birds that skirt our shores. The Shetlands and Orkneys swarm with ducks of all species, but, speaking broadly, no one dreams of going thither, though ornithologists might well be tempted by such books as 'The Home of a Naturalist.' So no one but an enthusiast would risk the voyage with sails to St. Kilda, the home of the very odoriferous fulmar, and a favourite resort of the black-headed gulls, who must modify their habits there to find packing room. That bird-story has been told lately by two brothers who hazarded their necks on the cliffs in feats so audacious as to have seemed incredible had they not prudently taken a camera for voucher. The Bass and the Rock of Ailsa are the grand breeding-places of the gannet or solan goose; and each shelf on the sheer cliffs along either coast is overcrowded to suffocation with razorbills and guillemots. Nothing can be more interesting or entrancing than on a sunny day, when the air is clear and the sky is cloudless, to sit anywhere on the wind-shorn turf, from the Moray Firth to the Dunbuy of Slains, and on to the cliffs of Flamborough, to watch the silvery feathered drift seaward and landward, to see the incessant bustle of fluttering wings over the eggs or the nurslings, and hear the wild clamour as the fishing goes forward over some herring shoal, with freebooters for ever on the look-out to swoop upon the honest fisherfolk. As for seabird-nesting extraordinary, it is to be found in perfection on the Ferne Isles, where the birds from time immemorial have enjoyed greater immunity than the sainted Cuthbert and his companions, who set up their Ebenezers there when those surf-beaten shores were infested by Dane and Northman. There are men who make profit of the eggs, it is true, but still the birds recognise that they have tolerable treatment. The islands are under the guardianship of the storms and the shoals,

there are not a few on which it is difficult to land at any time, and there are stacks of rocks, like the Pinnacles, which are inaccessible without appliances. Different species seem to appreciate different islands, and when a boat appears bearing down on their solitudes the air is darkened by the clamorous crowds, and you are deafened by fierce screams and the beating of the pinions. Stand off and give them brief space to settle down again, and the sands are suddenly carpeted with white and black, while the rock faces seem to be festooned with clinging draperies. The flocks of terns or sea-swallows show snow white over the green of the surges as they go circling round the black rocks like ptarmigan round the mountain peaks or pigeons round their dovecots; as for the guillemots, and notably the puffins, sitting or standing in solemn rows over their eggs, they look, as Sir George Dasent described them at the Faroes, like so many respectable family butlers in sober black with spotless shirt-fronts. After that it would be a bathos to come down to the waders—the oyster-catchers, the plovers, the petrels, and the sandpiper—who somehow contrive, by searching among drift-waifs and strays to pick up a decent though precarious living between low-water mark and the bent grass on the sandhills.

We hardly know at what season the aviary is most interesting. In spring there is all the bustle of a constant succession of arrivals, scarcely waiting to draw breath or take repose before breaking into a joyous concert of melody. Then comes the season of serenades apart, when, lightly turning to thoughts of love, they go in for the rivalry of serious flirtation. In early summer, long mated, they have settled down to family cares; the ladies are engrossed with their family concerns, but their husbands, although they are charged with the commissariat, are still singing cheerily in intervals of leisure. With the heat of the sultry summer the songs are hushed through the day, when, with the droning of the bees among the wild flowers and the tree blossoms, the listless languor of depression seems to fall upon everything and everybody. But with the first faint streaks of dawn on the dewy grass, the worms and night-beetles must look out for themselves, and the copses and shrubberies are still vocal. Then with the cool of eve, after the long-drawn semi-siesta, everything awakens to life again; the nightingale tunes up for the night, with all the tiny warblers among the sedges round the pools and the brooks, when the nightjar comes flitting from under the fir shadows, and the night owl breaks out in whooping and howling. You only realise the myriads of the birds that have been bred in

the aviary when the last of the latest broods have been hatched, when the wood carpets and hedgerows are richly laden with ripe fruits and ruddy berries, and when the migrants, marshalling themselves in ill-disciplined battalions, begin to bethink themselves of departure to more genial climes. What becomes of the great majority is a mystery. It is only certain that death must be busy during their southward flights and through the severity of our winter, for relatively few survive to greet the advent of another spring.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.

BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

NO. VIII. THE HOLY ISLAND

FOR three days of November a white fog stood motionless over the country. All day and all night smothered booms and bangs away to the south-west told that the Fastnet gun was hard at work, and the sirens of the American liners uplifted their monstrous female voices as they felt their way along the coast of Cork. On the third afternoon the wind began to whine about the windows of Shreelane, and the barometer fell like a stone. At 11 P.M. the storm rushed upon us with the roar and the suddenness of a train; the chimneys bellowed, the tall old house quivered, and the yelling wind drove against it, as a man puts his shoulder against a door to burst it in.

We none of us got much sleep, and if Mrs. Cadogan is to be believed—which experience assures me she is not—she spent the night in devotional exercises, and in ministering to the panic-stricken kitchen-maid by the light of a Blessed candle. All that day the storm screamed on, dry-eyed; at nightfall the rain began, and next morning, which happened to be Sunday, every servant in the house was a messenger of Job, laden with tales of leakages,

floods, and fallen trees, and inflated with the ill-concealed glory of their kind in evil tidings. To Peter Cadogan, who had been to early Mass, was reserved the crowning satisfaction of reporting that a big vessel had gone on the rocks at Yokahn Point the evening before, and was breaking up fast; it was rumoured that the crew had got ashore, but this feature, being favourable and uninteresting, was kept as much as possible in the background. Mrs. Cadogan, who had been to America in an ocean liner, became at once the latest authority on shipwrecks, and was of opinion that 'whoever would be dhrownded, it wouldn't be thim lads o' sailors. Sure wasn't there the greatest storm ever was in it the time meself was on the say, and what'd thim fellows do but to put us below entirely in the ship, and close down the doors on us, the way theirselves'd leg it when we'd be dhrownding!'

This view of the position was so startlingly novel that Philippa withdrew suddenly from the task of ordering dinner, and fell up the kitchen stairs in unsuitable laughter. Philippa has not the most rudimentary capacity for keeping her countenance.

That afternoon I was wrapped in the slumber, balmiest and most profound, that follows on a wet Sunday luncheon, when Murray, our D.I. of police, drove up in uniform, and came into the house on the top of a gust that set every door banging and every picture dancing on the walls. He looked as if his eyes had been blown out of his head, and he wanted something to eat very badly.

'I've been down at the wreck since ten o'clock this morning,' he said, 'waiting for her to break up, and once she does there'll be trouble. She's an American ship, and she's full up with rum, and bacon, and butter, and all sorts. Bosanquet is there with all his coastguards, and there are five hundred country people on the strand at this moment, waiting for the fun to begin. I've got ten of my fellows there, and I wish I had as many more. You'd better come back with me, Yeates, we may want the Riot Act before all's done!'

The heavy rain had ceased, but it seemed as if it had fed the wind instead of calming it, and when Murray and I drove out of Shreelane, the whole dirty sky was moving, full sailed, in from the south-west, and the telegraph wires were hanging in a loop from the post outside the gate. Nothing except a Skebawn car-horse would have faced the whooping charges of the wind that came at us across Corran Lake; stimulated mysteriously by whistles from the driver, Murray's yellow hireling pounded

woodenly along against the blast, till the smell of the torn sea-weed was borne upon it, and we saw the Atlantic waves come towering into the bay of Tralagough.

The ship was, or had been, a three-masted barque; two of her masts were gone, and her bows stood high out of water on the reef that forms one of the shark-like jaws of the bay. The long strand was crowded with black groups of people, from the bank of heavy shingle that had been hurled over on to the road, down to the slope where the waves pitched themselves and climbed and fought and tore the gravel back with them, as though they had dug their fingers in. The people were nearly all men, dressed solemnly and hideously in their Sunday clothes; most of them had come straight from Mass without any dinner, true to that Irish instinct that places its fun before its food. That the wreck was regarded as a spree of the largest kind was sufficiently obvious. Our car pulled up at a public-house that stood askew between the road and the shingle; it was humming with those whom Irish publicans are pleased to call 'Bona feeds,' and sundry of the same class were clustered round the door. Under the wall on the lee-side was seated a bagpiper, droning out 'The Irish Washerwoman' with nodding head and tapping heel, and a young man was cutting a few steps of a jig for the delectation of a group of girls.

So far Murray's constabulary had done nothing but exhibit their imposing chest measurement and spotless uniforms to the Atlantic; Bosanquet's coastguards had hitherto only salvaged some spars, the débris of a boat, and a dead sheep, but their time was coming. As we stumbled down over the shingle, battered by the wind and pelted by clots of foam, someone beside me shouted, 'She's gone!' A hill of water had smothered the wreck, and when it fell from her again nothing was left but the bows, with the bowsprit hanging from them in a tangle of rigging. The clouds, bronzed by an unseen sunset, hung low over her; in that greedy pack of waves, with the remorseless rocks above and below her, she seemed the most lonely and tormented of creatures.

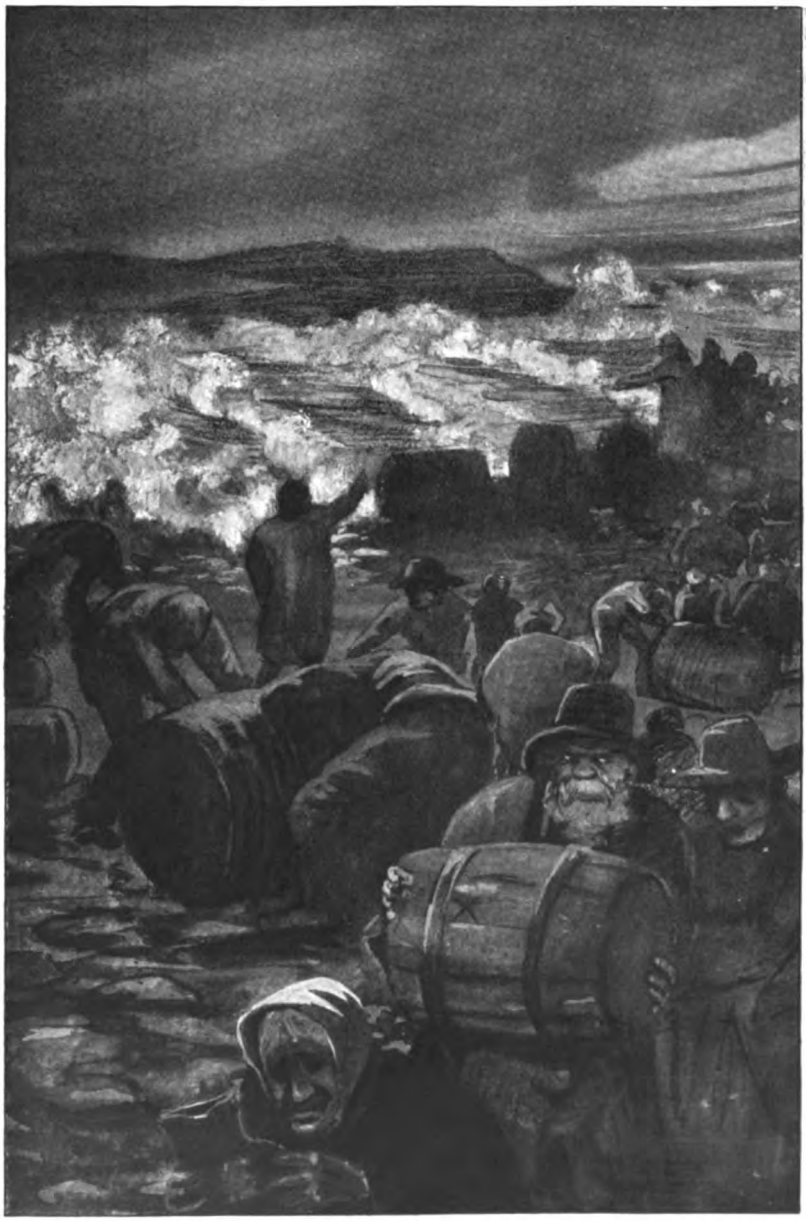
About half an hour afterwards the cargo began to come ashore on the top of the rising tide. Barrels were plunging and diving in the trough of the waves, like a school of porpoises; they were pitched up the beach in waist-deep rushes of foam; they rolled down again, and were swung up and shouldered by the next wave, playing a kind of Tom Tiddler's ground with the coastguards. Some of the barrels were big and dangerous, some were small and

nimble like young pigs, and the bluejackets were up to their middles as their prey dodged and ducked, and the police lined out along the beach to keep back the people. Ten men of the R.I.C. can do a great deal, but they cannot be in more than twenty or thirty places at the same instant; therefore they could hardly cope with a scattered and extremely active mob of four or five hundred, many of whom had taken advantage of their privileges as 'bona fide travellers,' and all of whom were determined on getting at the rum.

As the dusk fell the thing got more and more out of hand; the people had found out that the big puncheons held the rum, and had succeeded in capturing one. In the twinkling of an eye it was broached, and a wall of backs were shoving round it like a football scrummage. I have heard many rows in my time: I have seen two Irish regiments—one of them Militia—at each other's throats in Fermoy barracks; I have heard Philippa's water spaniel and two fox-terriers hunting a strange cat round the dairy; but never have I known such untrammelled bedlam as that which yelled round the rum-casks on Tralagough strand. For it was soon not a question of one broached cask, or even of two. The barrels were coming in fast, so fast that it was impossible for the representatives of law and order to keep on any sort of terms with them. The people, shouting with laughter, stove in the casks, and drank rum at 34° above proof, out of their hands, out of their hats, out of their boots. Women came fluttering over the hillsides through the twilight, carrying jugs, milk-pails, anything that would hold the liquor; I saw one of them, roaring with laughter, tilt a filthy zinc bucket to an old man's lips.

OUT OF THEIR BOOTS

With the darkness came anarchy. The rising tide brought



AS THE DUSK FELL THE THING GOT MORE AND MORE OUT OF HAND

more and yet more booty: great spars came lunging in on the lap of the waves, mixed up with cabin furniture, seamen's chests, and the black and slippery barrels, and the country people continued to flock in, and the drinking became more and more unbridled. Murray sent for more men and a doctor, and we slaved on hopelessly in the dark; collaring half-drunken men, shoving pig-headed casks up hills of shingle, hustling in among groups of roaring drinkers—we rescued perhaps one barrel in half a dozen. I began to know that there were men there who were not drunk and were not idle; I was also aware, as the strenuous hours of darkness passed, of an occasional rumble of cart wheels on the road. It was evident that the casks which were broached were the least part of the looting, but even they were beyond our control. The most that Bosanquet, Murray, and I could do was to concentrate our forces on the casks that had been secured, and to organise charges upon the swilling crowds in order to upset the casks that they had broached. Already men and boys were lying about, limp as leeches, motionless as the dead

MR. JAMES CANTY

'They'll kill themselves before morning, at this rate!' shouted Murray to me. 'They're drinking it by the quart! Here's another barrel; come on!'

We rallied our small forces and after a brief but furious struggle succeeded in capsizing it. It poured away in a flood over the stones, over the prostrate figures that sprawled on them, and a howl of reproach followed.

'If ye pour away any more o' that, Major,' said an unctuous voice in my ear, 'ye'll intoxicate the stones and they'll be getting up and knocking us down!'

I had been aware of a fat shoulder next to mine in the throng as we heaved the puncheon over, and I now recognised the ponderous wit and Falstaffian figure of Mr. James Canty, a noted member of the Skebawn Board of Guardians, and the owner of a large farm near at hand.

'I never saw worse work on this strand,' he went on. 'I considher these debaucheries a disgrace to the counthry.'

Mr. Canty was famous as an orator, and I presume that it was from long practice among his fellow P.L.G.'s that he was able, without apparent exertion, to out-shout the storm.

At this juncture the long awaited reinforcements arrived, and along with them came Dr. Jerome Hickey, armed with a black bag. Having mentioned that the bag contained a pump—not one of the common or garden variety—and that no pump on board a foundering ship had more arduous labours to perform, I prefer to pass to other themes. The wreck, which had at first appeared to be as inexhaustible and as variously stocked as that in the 'Swiss Family Robinson,' was beginning to fail in its supply. The crowd were by this time for the most part incapable from drink, and the fresh contingent of police tackled their work with some prospect of success by the light of a tar barrel, contributed by the owner of the public-house. At about the same time I began to be aware that I was aching with fatigue, that my clothes hung heavy and soaked upon me, that my face was stiff with the salt spray and the bitter wind, and that it was two hours past dinner-time. The possibility of fried salt herrings and hot whisky and water at the public-house rose dazzlingly before my mind, when Mr. Canty again crossed my path.

'In my opinion ye have the whole cargo under conthrol now, Major,' he said, 'and the police and the sailors should be able to account for it all now by the help of the light. Wasn't I the finished fool that I didn't think to send up to my house for a tar barrel before now! Well—we're all foolish sometimes! But indeed it's time for us to give over, and that's what I'm after saying to the Captain and Mr. Murray. You're exhausted now the three of ye, and if I might make so bold, I'd suggest that ye'd come up to my little place and have what'd warm ye before ye'd go home. It's only a few perches up the road.'

The tide had turned, the rain had begun again, and the tar barrel illumined the fact that Dr. Hickey's dreadful duties alone were pressing. We held a council and finally followed Mr. Canty, picking our way through wreckage of all kinds, including the human variety. Near the public-house I stumbled over something that was soft and had a squeak in it; it was the piper, with his head and shoulders in an overturned rum-barrel, and the bagpipes still under his arm.

I knew the outward appearance of Mr. Canty's house very well. It was a typical southern farmhouse, with dirty white-washed walls, a slated roof, and small, hermetically sealed windows staring at the morass of manure which constituted the yard. We

followed Mr. Canty up the filthy lane that led to it, picked our way round vague and squelching spurs of the manure heap, and were finally led through the kitchen into a stifling best parlour. Mrs. Canty, a vast and slatternly matron, had evidently made preparations for us; there was a newly lighted fire pouring flame up the chimney from layers of bogwood, there was whisky and brandy on the table, and a plateful of biscuits sugared in white and pink. Upon our hostess was a black silk dress which indifferently concealed the fact that she was short of boot-laces, and that the boots themselves had made many excursions to the yard and none to the blacking-bottle. Her manners, however, were admirable, and while I live I shall not forget her potato cakes. They came in hot and hot from a pot-oven, they were speckled with caraway seeds, they swam in salt butter, and we ate them shamelessly and greasily, and washed them down with hot whisky and water; I knew to a nicety how ill I should be next day, and heeded not.

'Well, gentlemen,' remarked Mr. Canty later on, in his best Board of Guardians' manner, 'I've seen many wrecks between this and the Mizzen Head, but I never witnessed a scene of more disgraceful ex-cess than what was in it to-night.'

'Hear, hear!' murmured Bosanquet with unseemly levity.

'I should say,' went on Mr. Canty, 'there was at one time to-night upwards of one hundhred men dead dhrunk on the strand, or anyway so dhrunk that if they'd attempt to spake they'd foam at the mouth.'

'The craytures!' interjected Mrs. Canty sympathetically.

'But if they're dhrunk to-day,' continued our host, 'it's nothing at all to what they'll be to-morrow and afther to-morrow, and it won't be on the strand they'll be dhrinkin' it.'

'Why, where will it be?' said Bosanquet, with his disconcerting English way of asking a point-blank question.

Mr. Canty passed his hand over his red cheeks.

'There'll be plenty asking that before all's said and done, Captain,' he said, with a compassionate smile, 'and there'll be plenty that could give the answer if they'll like, but by dam I don't think ye'll be apt to get much out of the Yokahn boys!'

'The Lord save us, 'twould be better to keep out from the likes o' thim!' put in Mrs. Canty, sliding a fresh avalanche of potato cakes on to the dish; 'didn't they pull the clothes off the gauger and pour potheen down his throath till he ran screeching through the streets o' Skebawn!'

James Canty chuckled.

'I remember there was a wreck here one time, and the undherwriters put me in charge of the cargo. Brandy it was—cases of the best Frinch brandy. The people had a song about it, what's this the first verse was—

One night to the rocks of Yokahn
Came the barque "Isabella" so dandy,
To pieces she went before dawn,
Herself and her cargo of brandy.
And all met a wathery grave
Excepting the vessel's car*pen*ther
Poor fellow, so far from his home.'

Mr. Canty chanted these touching lines in a tuneful if wheezy tenor. 'Well, gentlemen, we're all friends here,' he continued, 'and it's no harm to mention that this man below at the public-house came askin' me would I let him have some of it for a consideration. "Sullivan," says I to him, "if ye ran down gold in a cup in place of the brandy, I wouldn't give it to you. Of coorse," says I, "I'm not sayin' but that if a bottle was to get a crack of a stick, and it to be broken, and a man to drink a glass out of it, that would be no more than an accident." "That's no good to me," says he, "but if I had twelve gallons of that brandy in Cork," says he, "by the Holy German!" says he, saying an awful curse, "I'd sell twenty-five out of it!" Well, indeed, it was true for him; it was grand stuff. As the saying is, it would make a horse out of a cow!'

'It appears to be a handy sort of place for keeping a pub,' said Bosanquet.

'Shut to the door, Margaret,' said Mr. Canty with elaborate caution. '*It'd* be a queer place that wouldn't be handy for Sullivan.'

A further tale of great length was in progress when Dr. Hickey's Mephistophelian nose was poked into the best parlour.

'Hullo, Hickey! Pumped out? eh?' said Murray.

'If I am, there's plenty more like me,' replied the Doctor, enigmatically, 'and some of them three times over! James, did these gentlemen leave you a drop of anything that you'd offer me?'

'Maybe ye'd like a glass of rum, Doctor?' said Mr. Canty with a wink at his other guests.

Dr. Hickey shuddered.

I had next morning precisely the kind of mouth that I had anticipated, and it being my duty to spend the better part of the day administering justice in Skebawn, I received from Mr.

Flurry Knox and other of my brother magistrates precisely the class of condolences on my 'Monday head' that I found least amusing. It was unavailing to point out the resemblance between hot potato cakes and molten lead, or to dilate on their equal power of solidifying; the collective wisdom of the Bench decided that I was suffering from contraband rum, and rejoiced over me accordingly.

During the next three weeks Murray and Bosanquet put in a time only to be equalled by that of the heroes in detective romances. They began by acting on the hint offered by Mr. Canty, and were rewarded by finding eight barrels of bacon and three casks of rum in the heart of Mr. Sullivan's turf rick, placed there, so Mr. Sullivan explained with much detail, by enemies, with the object of getting his licence taken away. They stabbed potato gardens with crowbars to find the buried barrels, they explored the chimneys, they raided the cow-houses; and in every possible and impossible place, they found some of the cargo of the late barque 'John D. Williams,' and, as the sympathetic Mr. Canty said, 'For as much as they found, they left five times as much afther them!'

It was a wet, lingering autumn, but towards the end of November the rain dried up, the weather stiffened, and a week of light frosts and blue skies was offered as a tardy apology. Philippa possesses, in common with many of her sex, an inappeasable passion for picnics, and her ingenuity for devising occasions for them is only equalled by her gift for enduring their rigours. I have seen her tackle a moist chicken pie with a splinter of slate and my stylograph pen. I have known her to take the tea basket to an auction, and make tea in a four-wheeled inside car, regardless of the fact that it was coming under the hammer in ten minutes, and that the kettle took twenty minutes to boil. It will therefore be readily understood that the rare occasions were not allowed to pass uncelebrated by the tea basket.

'You'd much better shoot Corran Lake to-morrow,' my wife said to me one brilliant afternoon. 'We could send the punt over, and I could meet you on Holy Island with——'

The rest of the sentence was concerned with ways, means, and the tea basket, and need not be recorded.

I had taken the shooting of a long snipe bog that trailed from Corran Lake almost to the sea at Tralagough, and it was my custom to begin to shoot from the seaward end of it, and finally to work round the lake after duck.

To-morrow proved a heavenly morning, touched with frost, gilt with sun. I started early, and the mists were still smoking up from the calm, all-reflecting lake, as the Quaker stepped out along the level road, smashing the thin ice on the puddles with his big feet. Behind the calves of my legs sat Maria, Philippa's brown Irish water-spaniel, assiduously licking the barrels of my gun, as was her custom when the ecstasy of going out shooting was hers. Maria had been given to Philippa as a wedding-present, and since then it had been my wife's ambition that she should conform to the Beth Gelert standard of being 'a lamb at home, a lion in the chase.' Maria did pretty well as a lion: she hunted all dogs unmistakably smaller than herself, and whenever it was reasonably possible to do so she devoured the spoils of the chase, notably jack snipe. It was as a lamb that she failed; objectionable as I have no doubt a lamb would be as a domestic pet, it at least would not snatch the cold beef from the luncheon-table, nor yet, if banished for its crimes, would it spend the night in scratching the paint off the hall door. Maria bit beggars (who valued their disgusting limbs at five shillings the square inch), she bullied the servants, she concealed ducks' claws and fishes' backbones behind the sofa cushions, and yet, when she laid her brown snout upon my knee, and rolled her blackguard amber eyes upon me, and smote me with her feathered paw, it was impossible to remember her iniquities against her. On shooting mornings Maria ceased to be a buccaneer, a glutton, and a hypocrite. From the moment when I put my gun together her breakfast stood untouched until it suffered the final degradation of being eaten by the cats, and now in the trap she was shivering with excitement, and agonising in her soul lest she should even yet be left behind.

Slipper met me at the cross roads from which I had sent back the trap; Slipper, redder in the nose than anything I had ever seen off the stage, very husky as to the voice, and going rather tender on both feet. He informed me that I should have a grand day's shooting, the head poacher of the locality having, in a most gentlemanlike manner, refrained from exercising his sporting rights the day before, on hearing that I was coming. I understood that this was to be considered as a mark of high personal esteem, and I set to work at the bog with suitable gratitude.

In spite of Mr. O'Driscoll's magnanimity, I had not a very good morning. The snipe were there, but in the perfect stillness of the weather it was impossible to get near them, and five times out of six they were up, flickering and dodging, before I was

within shot. Maria became possessed of seven devils and broke away from heel the first time I let off my gun, ranging far and wide in search of the bird I had missed, and putting up every live thing for half a mile round, as she went splashing and steeple-chasing through the bog. Slipper expressed his opinion of her behaviour in language more appallingly picturesque and resourceful than any I have heard, even in the Skebawn Court-house; I admit that at the time I thought he spoke very suitably. Before she was recaptured every remaining snipe within earshot was lifted out of it by Slipper's steam-engine whistles and my own infuriated bellows; it was fortunate that the bog was spacious and that there was still a long tract of it ahead, where beyond these voices there was peace.

I worked my way on, jumping treacle-dark drains, floundering through the rustling yellow rushes, circumnavigating the bog-holes, and taking every possible and impossible chance of a shot; by the time I had reached Corran Lake I had got two and a half brace, retrieved by Maria with a perfection that showed what her powers were when the sinuous adroitness of Slipper's woodbine stick was fresh in her mind. But with Maria it was always the unexpected that happened. My last snipe, a jack, fell in the lake, and Maria, bursting through the reeds with kangaroo bounds, and cleaving the water like a torpedo-boat, was a model of all the virtues of her kind. She picked up the bird with a snake-like dart of her head, clambered with it on to a tussock, and there, well out of reach of the arm of the law, before our indignant eyes crunched it twice and bolted it.

'Well,' said Slipper complacently, some ten minutes afterwards, 'divil such a bating ever I gave a dog since the day Prince killed owld Mrs. Knox's paycock! Prince was a lump of a brown tarrier I had one time, and faith I kicked the toes out o' me owld boots on him before I had the owld lady composed!'

However composing Slipper's methods may have been to Mrs. Knox, they had quite the contrary effect upon a family party of duck that had been lying in the reeds. With horrified outcries they broke into flight, and now were far away on the ethereal mirror of the lake, among strings of their fellows that were floating and quacking in preoccupied indifference to my presence.

A promenade along the lake-shore demonstrated the fact that without a boat there was no more shooting for me; I looked across to the island where, some time ago, I had seen Philippa and her punt arrive. The boat was tied to an overhanging tree,

but my wife was nowhere to be seen. I was opening my mouth to give a hail, when I saw her emerge precipitately from among the trees and jump into the boat; Philippa had not in vain spent many summers on the Thames, she was under way in a twinkling, sculled a score of strokes at the rate of a finish, then stopped and stared at the peaceful island. I called to her, and in a minute or two the punt had crackled through the reeds, and shoved its blunt nose ashore at the spot where I was standing.

'Sinclair,' said Philippa in awe-struck tones, 'there's something on the island!'

'I hope there's something to eat there,' said I.

'I tell you there *is* something there, alive,' said my wife with her eyes as large as saucers; 'it's making an awful sound like snoring.'

'That's the fairies, ma'am,' said Slipper with complete certainty; 'sure I known them that seen fairies in that island as thick as the grass, and every one o' them with little caps on them.'

Philippa's wide gaze wandered to Slipper's hideous pug face and back to me.

'It was not a human being, Sinclair!' she said combatively, though I had not uttered a word.

Maria had already, after the manner of dogs, leaped, dripping, into the boat: I prepared to follow her example.

'Major,' said Slipper, in a tragic whisper, 'there was a man was a night on that island one time, watching duck, and Thim People cot him, and dhragged him through Hell and through Death, and threw him in the tide——'

'Shove off the boat,' I said, too hungry for argument.

Slipper obeyed, throwing his knee over the gunwale as he did so, and tumbling into the bow; we could have done without him very comfortably, but his devotion was touching.

Holy Island was perhaps a hundred yards long, and about half as many broad; it was covered with trees and a dense growth of rhododendrons; somewhere in the jungle was a ruined fragment of a chapel, smothered in ivy and briars, and in a little glade in the heart of the island there was a holy well. We landed, and it was obviously a sore humiliation to Philippa that not a sound was to be heard in the spell-bound silence of the island, save the cough of a heron on a tree-top.

'It *was* there,' she said, with an unconvinced glance at the surrounding thickets.

'Sure, I'll give a thrawl through the island, ma'am,'

AND THERE, BEFORE OUR INDIGNANT EYES, CRUNCHED IT TWICE AND BOLTED IT

volunteered Slipper with unexpected gallantry, 'an' if it's the divil himself is in it, I'll rattle him into the lake!'

He went swaggering on his search, shouting, 'Hi, cock!' and whacking the rhododendrons with his stick, and after an interval returned and assured us that the island was uninhabited. Being provided with refreshments he again withdrew, and Philippa and Maria and I fed variously and at great length, and washed the plates with water from the holy well. I was smoking a cigarette when we heard Slipper addressing the solitudes at the farther end of the island, and ending with one of his whisky-throated crows of laughter.

He presently came lurching towards us through the bushes, and a glance sufficed to show even Philippa—who was as incompetent a judge of such matters as many of her sex—that he was undeniably screwed.

'Major Yeates!' he began, 'and Mrs. Major Yeates, with respex to ye, I'm bastely dhrunk! Me head is light since the 'fluenzy, and the docthor told me I should carry a little bottle-een o' sperrits——'

'Look here,' I said to Philippa, 'I'll take him across, and bring the boat back for you.'

'Sinclair,' responded my wife with concentrated emotion, 'I would rather die than stay on this island alone!'

Slipper was getting drunker every moment, but I managed to stow him on his back in the bows of the punt, in which position he at once began to uplift husky and wandering strains of melody. To this accompaniment we, as Tennyson says,

> moved from the brink like some full breasted swan,
> That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
> Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
> With swarthy web.

Slipper would certainly have been none the worse for taking the flood, and, as the burden of 'Lannigan's Ball' strengthened and spread along the tranquil lake, and the duck once more fled in justifiable consternation, I felt much inclined to make him do so.

We made for the end of the lake that was nearest Shreelane, and, as we rounded the point of the island, another boat presented itself to our view. It contained my late entertainer, Mrs. Canty, seated bulkily in the stern, while a small boy bowed himself between the two heavy oars.

'It's a lovely evening, Major Yeates,' she called out. 'I'm just going to the island to get some water from the holy well for me

daughter that has an impression on her chest. Indeed, I thought 'twas yourself was singing a song for Mrs. Yeates when I heard you coming, but sure Slipper is a great warrant himself for singing.'

'May the divil crack the two legs undher ye!' bawled Slipper in acknowledgment of the compliment.

Mrs. Canty laughed genially, and her boat lumbered away.

I shoved Slipper ashore at the nearest point; Philippa and I paddled to the end of the lake, and abandoning the duck as a bad business, walked home.

A few days afterwards it happened that it was incumbent upon me to attend the funeral of the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese. It was what is called in France '*un bel enterrement*,' with inky flocks of tall-hatted priests, and countless yards of white scarves, and a repast of monumental solidity at the Bishop's residence. The actual interment was to take place in Cork, and we moved in long and imposing procession to the railway station, where a special train awaited the cortège. My friend Mr. James Canty was among the mourners: an important and active personage, exchanging condolences with the priests, giving directions to porters, and blowing his nose with a trumpeting mournfulness that penetrated all the other noises of the platform. He was condescending enough to notice my presence, and found time to tell me that he had given Mr. Murray 'a sure word' with regard to some of '*the wreckage*'—this with deep significance, and a wink of an inflamed and tearful eye. I saw him depart in a first-class carriage, and the odour of sanctity; seeing that he was accompanied by seven priests, and that both windows were shut, the latter must have been considerable.

Afterwards, in the town, I met Murray, looking more pleased with himself than I had seen him since he had taken up the unprofitable task of smuggler-hunting.

'Come along and have some lunch,' he said, 'I've got a real good thing on this time! That chap Canty came to me late last night, and told me that he knew for a fact that the island on Corran Lake was just stiff with barrels of bacon and rum, and that I'd better send every man I could spare to-day to get them into the town. I sent the men out at 8 o'clock this morning; I think I've gone one better than Bosanquet this time!'

I began to realise that Philippa was going to score heavily on the subject of the fairies that she had heard snoring on the island, and I imparted to Murray the leading features of our picnic there

'Oh, Slipper's been up to his chin in that rum from the first,' said Murray. 'I'd like to know who his sleeping partner was!'

It was beginning to get dark before the loaded carts of the salvage party came lumbering past Murray's windows and into the yard of the police-barrack. We followed them, and in so doing picked up Flurry Knox, who was sauntering in the same direction. It was a good haul, five big casks of rum, and at least a dozen smaller barrels of bacon and butter, and Murray and his Chief Constable smiled seraphically on one another as the spoil was unloaded and stowed in a shed.

'Wouldn't it be as well to see how the butter is keeping?' remarked Flurry, who had been looking on silently, with, as I had noticed, a still and amused eye. 'The rim of that small keg there looks as if it had been shifted lately.'

The sergeant looked hard at Flurry; he knew as well as most people that a hint from Mr. Knox was usually worth taking. He turned to Murray.

'Will I open it, sir?'

'Oh! open it if Mr. Knox wishes,' said Murray, who was not famous for appreciating other people's suggestions.

The keg was opened.

'Funny butter,' said Flurry.

The sergeant said nothing. The keg was full of black bog-mould. Another was opened, and another, all with the same result.

'Damnation!' said Murray, suddenly losing his temper. 'What's the use of going on with those? Try one of the rum casks.'

A few moments passed in total silence while a tap and a spigot were sent for and applied to the barrel. The sergeant drew off a mugful and put his nose to it with the deliberation of a connoisseur.

'Water, sir,' he pronounced, 'dirty water, with a small indication of sperrits.'

A junior constable tittered explosively, met the light blue glare of Murray's eye, and withered away.

'Perhaps it's holy water!' said I, with a wavering voice.

Murray's glance pinned me like an assegai, and I also faded into the background.

'Well,' said Flurry in dulcet tones, 'if you want to know where the stuff is that was in those barrels, I can tell you, for I

was told it myself half an hour ago. It's gone to Cork with the Bishop by special train!'

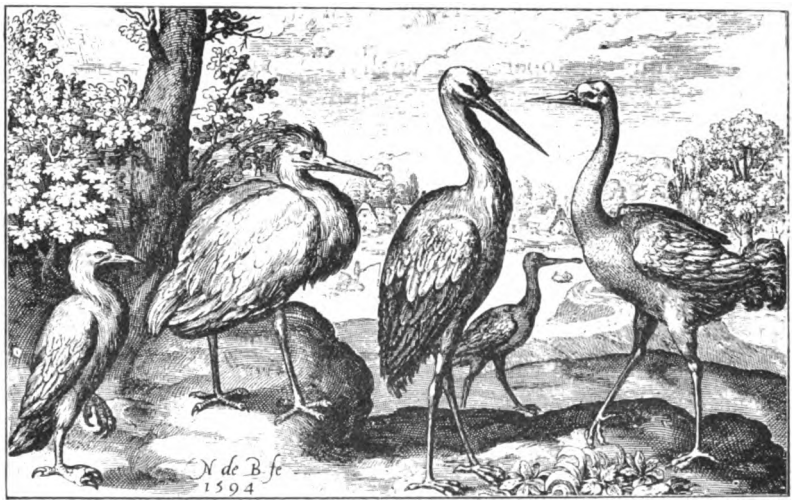
Mr. Canty was undoubtedly a man of resource. Mrs. Canty had mistakenly credited me with an intelligence equal to her own, and on receiving from Slipper a highly coloured account of how audibly Mr. Canty had slept off his potations, had regarded the secret of Holy Island as having been given away. That night and the two succeeding ones were spent in the transfer of the rum to bottles, and the bottles and the butter to fish boxes; these were, by means of a slight lubrication of the railway underlings loaded into a truck as 'Fresh Fish, Urgent,' and attached to the Bishop's funeral train, while the police, decoyed far from the scene of action, were breaking their backs over barrels of bog water. 'I suppose,' continued Flurry, pleasantly, 'you don't know the pub that Canty's brother has in Cork. Well, I do. I'm going to buy some rum there next week, cheap.'

'I shall proceed against Canty!' said Murray, with fateful calm.

'You won't proceed far,' said Flurry; 'you'll not get as much evidence out of the whole country as'd hang a cat.'

'Who was your informant?' demanded Murray.

Flurry laughed. 'Well, by the time the train was in Cork, yourself and the Major were the only two men in the town that weren't talking about it.'



NOTES

BY 'RAPIER'

THE match between Roberts and Dawson was interesting as enabling one to contrast the styles of the two men. Dawson is a wonderful, accurate, skilful, accomplished, steady, solid player, with, of course, an exceptional knowledge of the game. But he is in a totally different class from Roberts, who, in truth, stands absolutely alone, constituting by himself, indeed, a class altogether apart. I am convinced that if Dawson practises assiduously for twenty years, he will never acquire the marvellous delicacy and perfect command of the balls which Roberts exhibits. If Roberts's eyesight fails, or he breaks down in any other way, he is naturally liable to be beaten; so long as he does not deteriorate from his present standard of excellence, he will assuredly beat Dawson at his ease. Roberts missed so many easy shots when I was present at the game, and seemed at times to take so little pains, that my idea is he did not care to exert himself and get too far ahead; and I am informed that this was also the notion of Mr. Rimington Wilson, who, when the first week was over, told Roberts not to fool about, but to go ahead and show what he could do, remarking that people would go to see him if he were two or three thousand in front, just as readily as if it were made to appear that there was going to be a finish.

I know nothing of Roberts personally, but I note that a section of the sporting press seem to regard him with animosity—why, I have no idea—and in some papers due credit is not given to him. The one thing certain is that we have never seen anything like such a player before; whether we ever shall see his like is a question for the future.

It is no doubt sufficiently galling to go to law and to be beaten, but when the verdict against you is received with hearty applause from all quarters of the court, the distress of the defeat is aggravated. That is what happened to Lady Harberton in her ill-advised proceedings against the landlady who had refused to admit a wearer of so-called 'rationals' into her coffee-room. Lady Harberton's action was foolish, because the landlady had not declined to serve her would-be customer, but only to serve her in a certain room of the hotel, and Lord Coleridge's attempt to confuse the issue was quite unavailing. What Lady Harberton chooses to think and do, however, is of no importance except to herself and her friends; but it was a matter of regret to see such a useful and generally well managed association as the Tourists' Cycling Club backing up so preposterous a case, more especially as a great many members of the club—no one would be surprised to find that they constituted a vast majority—had no sort of sympathy with the defence, which involved the club funds and the members' reputation as people of good taste and common sense—of rationality as opposed to 'rationals.'

That would have been a great and exciting match between Manifesto and Gentle Ida if it had come off, but the friends of the mare did not seem at all inclined to accept Mr. Bulteel's challenge; and, of course, Gentle Ida's engagement in the Auteuil Steeplechase is a not unreasonable excuse. As to that race, my own impression is that she is far more likely to fall than to stand up, and that if she does not come down she will get so much abroad at some of the jumps that she is tolerably certain to be beaten. Besides ordinary fences she will have to get over the wall, the open water—an obstacle very likely to upset an animal unaccustomed to such a thing—the big water jump in front of the stands, in which I have seen three or four horses at

a time up to their necks, and the bank, a very tricky contrivance not met with in England. It does not strike me that there are any very good steeplechase horses in France just now, and if the Auteuil starters were brought to Kempton or Sandown, Gentle Ida would most likely beat her French opponents with ease; but at Auteuil it is a different matter. It seems, too, that she will have Soliman to beat in France. I should be very sorry to risk any money on her chances across the Channel. If it be correct that Mr. Dyas, late owner of Manifesto and Gentle Ida, believed that the mare was always the better, it is extremely liberal of Mr. Bulteel to offer to give her 7 lb. Perhaps next season Mr. Bottomley may screw up his courage; I imagine Mr. Bulteel will be ready.

Mr. Hugh F. Clutterbuck kindly writes to me: 'In the discussion as to number of kills to cartridges all your correspondents argue the matter on their individual performance. I cannot help thinking that the following test, which would take an average of the game killed by all of the guns, is better; at least, I will ask you to consider it. I shot 42 days last year, and helped to kill 2,263 head of game, as follows:—

Partridges	429
Pheasants	872
Hares	234
Rabbits	672
Wild-duck	38
Various	18
Total	2,263

I personally shot 1,980 cartridges. The guns altogether numbered 167, or an average of four guns a day. I shot an average of 45 cartridges a day, and therefore presume that the other guns did the same; therefore, the four guns shot 180 cartridges per diem. The average amount of game shot and gathered was 54 head. (Divide 2,263 game by 42 days.) Furthermore, divide the 54 head of game by the 180 cartridges shot, and you have one kill to every $3\frac{1}{3}$ cartridges. So that 100 head of game would require 333 cartridges. The guns were the average class, some rather better, some a little worse.' This was, it may be remembered, the precise total that Lord Walsingham thought an average good shot ought to kill throughout the season.

As usual, I touch the subject of racing at a most awkward time. The Two Thousand Guineas will be over when this number appears, and before the next number is issued—the day before—the Derby will have been run. The first-named race, as a rule, throws so much light on the latter that it would be absurd to consider Derby probabilities until the Two Thousand has been decided. All I could do would be to give vague expressions of opinion which very likely would have been proved incorrect before the opinions were published; and in answer to various correspondents who are good enough to wish for my views on horses and racing, let me once more say that the reasons why I cannot fulfil their flattering requests may be gathered from what I have just written. I do not believe that Flying Fox is a really good colt, but I expect he is about the best of the English three-year-olds, and it will not surprise me to find that if (six weeks hence) Holocauste is sent to Epsom, Flying Fox will beat him. I am inclined to think that the present two-year-olds are on the whole a good lot—far better than we have had for a couple of seasons past, at any rate. Not improbably we may find some animals of really high class—I judge from the fact that several which have not yet been out, and will not appear till Ascot or later, are very far superior to youngsters that have already won decent two-year-old races.

THE
BADMINTON MAGAZINE
June 1899

SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.

BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

No. IX. THE POLICY OF THE CLOSED DOOR

THE disasters and humiliations that befell me at Drumcurran Fair may yet be remembered. They certainly have not been forgotten in the regions about Skebawn, where the tale of how Bernard Shute and I stole each other's horses has passed into history. The grand-daughter of the Mountain Hare, bought by Mr. Shute with such light-hearted enthusiasm, was restored to that position between the shafts of a cart that she was so well fitted to grace; Moonlighter, his other purchase, spent the two months following on the fair in 'favouring' a leg with a strained sinew, and in receiving visits from the local vet., who, however uncertain in his diagnosis of Moonlighter's leg, had accurately estimated the length of Bernard's foot.

Miss Bennett's mare Cruiskeen, alone of the trio, was immediately and thoroughly successful. She went in harness like a hero, she carried Philippa like an elder sister, she was never sick or sorry; as Peter Cadogan summed her up, 'That one 'd live where another 'd die.' In her safe keeping Philippa made her *début* with hounds at an uneventful morning's cubbing, with no particular result, except that Philippa returned home so stiff that she had to go to bed for a day, and arose more determined than ever to be a fox-hunter.

The opening meet of Mr. Knox's foxhounds was on November 1, and on that morning Philippa on Cruiskeen, accompanied by me on The Quaker, set out for Ardmeen Cross, the time-honoured fixture for All Saints' Day. The weather was grey and quiet, and full of all the moist sweetness of an Irish autumn. There had been a great deal of rain during the past month; it had turned the bracken to a purple brown, and had filled the hollows with shining splashes of water. The dead leaves were slippery under foot, and the branches above were thinly decked with yellow, where the pallid survivors of summer still clung to their posts. As Philippa and I sedately approached the meet the red coats of Flurry Knox and his whip, Dr. Jerome Hickey, were to be seen on the road at the top of the hill; Cruiskeen put her head in the air, and stared at them with eyes that understood all they portended.

'Sinclair,' said my wife hurriedly, as a straggling hound, flogged in by Dr. Hickey, uttered a grievous and melodious howl, 'remember, if they find, it's no use to talk to me, for I shan't be able to speak.'

I was sufficiently acquainted with Philippa in moments of enthusiasm to exhibit silently the corner of a clean pocket-handkerchief; I have seen her cry when a police constable won a bicycle race in Skebawn; she has wept at hearing Sir Valentine Knox's health drunk with musical honours at a tenants' dinner. It is an amiable custom, but, as she herself admits, it is unbecoming.

An imposing throng, in point of numbers, was gathered at the cross-roads, the riders being almost swamped in the crowd of traps, outside cars, bicyclists, and people on foot. The field was an eminently representative one. The Clan Knox was, as usual, there in force, its more aristocratic members dingily respectable in black coats and tall hats that went impartially to weddings, funerals, and hunts, and, like a horse that is past mark of mouth, were no longer to be identified with any special epoch; there was a humbler squireen element in tweeds and flat-brimmed pot-hats, and a good muster of farmers, men of the spare, black-muzzled, West of Ireland type, on horses that ranged from the cart mare, clipped trace high, to shaggy and leggy three-year-olds, none of them hunters, but all of them able to hunt. Philippa and I worked our way to the heart of things, where was Flurry, seated on his brown mare, in what appeared to be a somewhat moody silence. As we exchanged greetings I was aware that his eye was resting with extreme disfavour upon two approaching figures

I put up my eyeglass, and perceived that one of them was Miss Sally Knox, on a tall grey horse; the other was Mr. Bernard Shute, in all the flawless beauty of his first pink coat, mounted on Stockbroker, a well-known, hard-mouthed, big-jumping bay, recently purchased from Dr. Hickey.

During the languors of a damp autumn the neighbourhood had been much nourished and sustained by the privilege of observing and diagnosing the progress of Mr. Shute's flirtation with Miss Sally Knox. What made it all the more enjoyable for the lookers-on—or most of them—was, that although Bernard s courtship was of the nature of a proclamation from the housetops, Miss Knox's attitude left everything to the imagination. To Flurry Knox the romantic but despicable position of slighted rival was comfortably allotted; his sole sympathisers were Philippa and old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas, but no one knew if he needed sympathisers. Flurry was a man of mystery.

Mr. Shute and Miss Knox approached us rapidly, the latter's mount pulling hard.

'Flurry,' I said, 'isn't that grey the horse Shute bought from you last July at the fair?'

Flurry did not answer me. His face was as black as thunder. He turned his horse round, cursing two country boys who got in his way, with low and concentrated venom, and began to move forward, followed by the hounds. If his wish was to avoid speaking to Miss Sally it was not to be gratified.

'Good morning, Flurry,' she began, sitting close down to Moonlighter's ramping jog as she rode up beside her cousin. 'What a hurry you're in! We passed no end of people on the road who won't be here for another ten minutes.'

'No more will I,' was Mr. Knox's cryptic reply, as he spurred the brown mare into a trot.

Moonlighter made a vigorous but frustrated effort to buck, and indemnified himself by a successful kick at a hound.

'Bother you, Flurry! Can't you walk for a minute?' exclaimed Miss Sally, who looked about as large, in relation to her horse, as the conventional tomtit on a round of beef. 'You might have more sense than to crack your whip under this horse's nose! I don't believe you know what horse it is even!'

I was not near enough to catch Flurry's reply.

'Well, if you did not want him to be lent to me you should not have sold him to Mr. Shute!' retorted Miss Knox, in her clear, provoking little voice.

'I suppose he's afraid to ride him himself,' said Flurry,

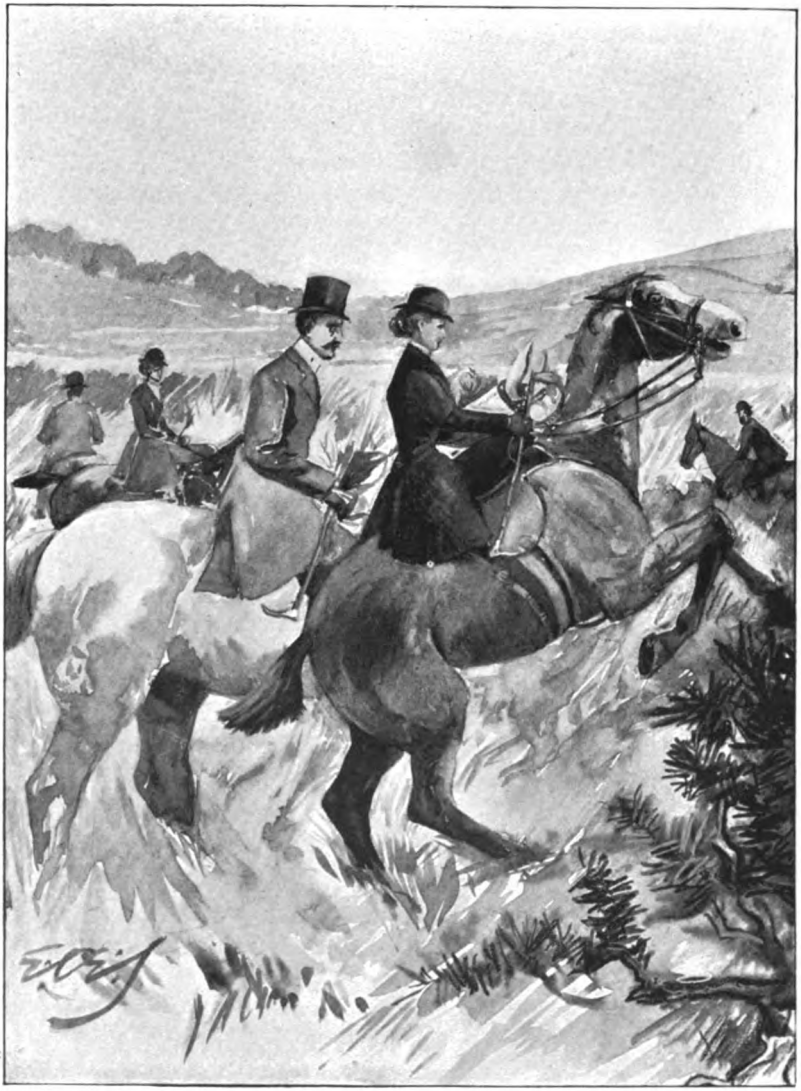
turning his horse in at a gate. 'Get ahead there, Jerome, can't you? It's better to put them in at this end than to have everyone riding on top of them!'

Miss Sally's cheeks were still very pink when I came up and began to talk to her, and her grey-green eyes had a look in them like those of an angry kitten.

The riders moved slowly down a rough pasture-field, and took up their position along the brow of Ardmeen covert, into which the hounds had already hurled themselves with their customary contempt for the convenances. Flurry's hounds, true to their nationality, were in the habit of doing the right thing in the wrong way.

Untouched by autumn, the furze bushes of Ardmeen covert were darkly green, save for a golden fleck of blossom here and there, and the glistering grey cobwebs that stretched from spike to spike. The look of the ordinary gorse covert is familiar to most people as a tidy enclosure of an acre or so, filled with low plants of well-educated gorse; not so many will be found who have experience of it as a rocky, sedgy wilderness, half a mile square, garrisoned with brigades of furze bushes, some of them higher than a horse's head, lean, strong, and cunning, like the foxes that breed in them, impenetrable, with their bristling spikes, as a hedge of bayonets. By dint of infinite leisure and obstinate greed, the cattle had made paths for themselves through the bushes to the patches of grass that they hemmed in; their hoof-prints were guides to the explorer, down muddy staircases of rock, and across black intervals of unplumbed bog. The whole covert slanted gradually down to a small river that raced round three sides of it, and beyond the stream, in agreeable contrast, lay a clean and wholesome country of grass fields and banks.

The hounds drew slowly along and down the hill towards the river, and the riders hung about outside the covert, and tried —I can answer for at least one of them—to decide which was the least odious of the ways through it, in the event of the fox breaking at the far side. Miss Sally took up a position not very far from me, and it was easy to see that she had her hands full with her borrowed mount, on whose temper the delay and suspense were visibly telling. His iron-grey neck was white from the chafing of the reins; had the ground under his feet been red-hot he could hardly have sidled and hopped more uncontrollably; nothing but the most impassioned conjugation of the verb to condemn could have supplied any human equivalent for the manner in which he tore holes in the sedgy grass with a furious



SHE HAD HER HANDS FULL WITH MOONLIGHTER

forefoot. Those who were even superficial judges of character gave his heels a liberal allowance of sea-room, and Mr. Shute, who could not be numbered among such, and had, as usual, taken up a position as near Miss Sally as possible, was rewarded by a double knock on his horse's ribs that was a cause of heartless mirth to the lady of his affections.

Not a hound had as yet spoken, but they were forcing their way through the gorse forest and shoving each other jealously aside with growing excitement, and Flurry could be seen at intervals, moving forward in the direction they were indicating. It was at this juncture that the ubiquitous Slipper presented himself at my horse's shoulder.

'"Tis for the river he's making, Major,' he said, with an upward roll of his squinting eyes, that nearly made me sea-sick. 'He's a Castle Knox fox that came in this morning, and ye should get ahead down to the ford!'

A tip from Slipper was not to be neglected, and Philippa and I began a cautious progress through the gorse, followed by Miss Knox as quietly as Moonlighter's nerves would permit.

'Wishful has it!' she exclaimed, as a hound came out into view, uttered a sharp yelp, and drove forward.

'Hark! hark!' roared Flurry with at least three *r*'s reverberating in each 'hark;' at the same instant came a holloa from the farther side of the river, and Dr. Hickey's renowned and blood-curdling screech was uplifted at the bottom of the covert. Then babel broke forth, as the hounds, converging from every quarter, flung themselves shrieking on the line. Moonlighter went straight up on his hind legs, and dropped again with a bound that sent him crushing past Philippa and Cruiskeen; he did it a second time, and was almost on to the tail of The Quaker, whose bulky person was not to be hurried in any emergency.

'Get on if you can, Major Yeates!' called out Sally, steadying the grey as well as she could in the narrow pathway between the great gorse bushes.

Other horses were thundering behind us, men were shouting to each other in similar passages right and left of us, the cry of the hounds filled the air with a kind of delirium. A low wall with a stick laid along it barred the passage in front of me, and The Quaker firmly and immediately decided not to have it until someone else had dislodged the pole.

'Go ahead!' I shouted, squeezing to one side with heroic disregard of the furze bushes and my new tops.

The words were hardly out of my mouth when Moonlighter,

mad with thwarted excitement, shot by me, hurtled over the obstacle with extravagant fury, landed twelve feet beyond it on clattering slippery rock, saved himself from falling with an eel-like forward buck on to sedgy ground, and bolted at full speed down the muddy cattle track. There are corners—rocky, most of them—in that cattle track, that Sally has told me she will remember to her dying day; boggy holes of any depth, ranging between two feet and halfway to Australia, that she says she does not fail to mention in the General Thanksgiving; but at the time they occupied mere fractions of the strenuous seconds in which it was hopeless for her to do anything but try to steer, trust to luck, sit hard down into the saddle and try to stay there. (For my part, I would as soon try to adhere to the horns of a charging bull as to the crutches of a side-saddle, but happily the necessity is not likely to arise.) I saw Flurry Knox a little ahead of her on the same track, jamming his mare into the furze bushes to get out of her way; he shouted something after her about the ford, and started to gallop for it himself by a breakneck short cut.

The hounds were already across the river, and it was obvious that, ford or no ford, Moonlighter's intentions might be simply expressed in the formula 'Be with them I will.' It was all down-hill to the river, and among the furze bushes and rocks there was neither time nor place to turn him. He rushed at it with a shattering slip upon a streak of rock, with a heavy plunge in the deep ground by the brink; it was as bad a take-off for twenty feet of water as could well be found. The grey horse rose out of the boggy stuff with all the impetus that pace and temper could give, but it was not enough. For one instant the twisting, sliding current was under Sally, the next a veil of water sprang up all round her, and Moonlighter was rolling and lurching in the desperate effort to find foothold in the rocky bed of the stream.

I was following at the best pace I could kick out of The Quaker, and saw the water swirl into her lap as her horse rolled to the near-side. She caught the mane to save herself, but he struggled on to his legs again, and came floundering broadside on to the further bank. In three seconds she had got out of the saddle and flung herself at the bank, grasping the rushes, and trying, in spite of the sodden weight of her habit, to drag herself out of the water.

At the same instant I saw Flurry and the brown mare dashing through the ford, twenty yards higher up. He was off his horse and beside her with that uncanny quickness that Flurry reserved

for moments of emergency, and, catching her by the arms, swung her on to the bank as easily as if she had been the kennel terrier.

'Catch the horse!' she called out, scrambling to her feet.

'Damn the horse!' returned Flurry, in the rage that is so often the reaction from a bad scare.

I turned along the bank and made for the ford; by this time it was full of hustling, splashing riders, through whom Bernard Shute, furiously picking up a bad start, drove a devastating way. He tried to turn his horse down the bank towards Miss Knox, but the hounds were running hard, and, to my intense amusement, Stockbroker refused to abandon the chase, and swept his rider away in the wake of his stable companion, Dr. Hickey's young chestnut. By this time two country boys had, as is usual in such cases, risen from the earth, and fished Moonlighter out of the stream. Miss Sally wound up an acrimonious argument with her cousin by observing that she didn't care what he said, and placing her waterlogged boot in his obviously unwilling hand, in a second was again in the saddle, gathering up the wet reins with the trembling, clumsy fingers of a person who is thoroughly chilled and in a violent hurry. She set Moonlighter going, and was away in a moment, galloping him at the first fence at a pace that suited his steeplechasing ideas.

'Mr. Knox!' panted Philippa, who had by this time joined us, 'make her go home!'

'She can go where she likes as far as I'm concerned,' responded Mr. Knox, pitching himself on to his mare's back and digging in the spurs.

Moonlighter had already glided over the bank in front of us, with a perfunctory flick at it with his heels; Flurry's mare and Cruiskeen jumped it side by side with equal precision. It was a bank of some five feet high; The Quaker charged it enthusiastically, refused it abruptly, and, according to his infuriating custom at such moments, proceeded to tear hurried mouthfuls of grass.

'Will I give him a couple o' belts for your Honour?' shouted one of the running accompaniment of country boys.

'You will!' said I, with some further remarks to The Quaker that I need not commit to paper.

Swish! Whack! The sound was music in my ears, as the good, remorseless ash sapling bent round The Quaker's dappled hind-quarters. At the third stripe he launched both his heels in the operator's face; at the fourth he reared undecidedly; at the fifth he bundled over the bank in a manner purged of hesitation.

'Ha!' yelled my assistants, 'that'll put the fear o' God in him!' as The Quaker fled headlong after the hunt. 'He'll be the betther o' that while he lives!'

Without going quite as far as this, I must admit that for the next half-hour he was astonishingly the better of it.

The Castle Knox fox was making a very pretty line of it over the seven miles that separated him from his home. He headed through a grassy country of Ireland's mild and brilliant green, fenced with sound and buxom banks, enlivened by stone walls, uncompromised by the presence of gates, and yet comfortably laced with lanes for the furtherance of those who had laid to heart Wolsey's valuable advice: 'Fling away ambition: by that sin fell the angels.' The flotsam and jetsam of the hunt pervaded the landscape: standing on one long bank, three dismounted farmers flogged away at the refusing steeds below them, like anglers trying to rise a sulky fish; half a dozen hats, bobbing in a string, showed where the road riders followed the delusive windings of a bohireen. It was obvious that in the matter of ambition they would not have caused Cardinal Wolsey a moment's uneasiness; whether angels or otherwise, they were not going to run any risk of falling.

Flurry's red coat was like a beacon two fields ahead of me, with Philippa following in his tracks; it was the first run worthy of the name that Philippa had ridden, and I blessed Miss Bobby Bennett as I saw Cruiskeen's undefeated fencing. An encouraging twang of the Doctor's horn notified that the hounds were giving us a chance; even The Quaker pricked his blunt ears and swerved in his stride to the sound. A stone wall, a rough patch of heather, a boggy field, dinted deep and black with hoof marks, and the stern chase was at an end. The hounds had checked on the outskirts of a small wood, and the field, thinned down to a panting dozen or so, viewed us with the disfavour shown by the first flight towards those who unexpectedly add to their select number. In the depths of the wood Dr. Hickey might be heard uttering those singular little yelps of encouragement that to the irreverent suggest a milkman in his dotage. Bernard Shute, who neither knew nor cared what the hounds were doing, was expatiating at great length to an uninterested squireen upon the virtues and perfections of his new mount.

'I did all I knew to come and help you at the river,' he said, riding up to the splashed and still dripping Sally, 'but Stockbroker wouldn't hear of it. I pulled his ugly head round till his nose was on my boot, but he galloped away just the same!'

'He was quite right,' said Miss Sally; 'I didn't want you in the least.'

As Miss Sally's red gold coil of hair was turned towards me during this speech, I could only infer the glance with which it was delivered, from the fact that Mr. Shute responded to it with one of those firm gazes of adoration in which the neighbourhood took such an interest, and crumbled away into incoherency.

'HE'LL BE THE BETTHER O' THAT WHILE HE LIVES!'

A shout from the top of a hill interrupted the amenities of the check; Flurry was out of the wood in half a dozen seconds, blowing shattering blasts upon his horn, and the hounds rushed to him, knowing the 'gone away' note that was never blown in vain. The brown mare came out through the trees and the undergrowth like a woodcock down the wind, and jumped across a stream on to a more than questionable bank;

the hounds splashed and struggled after him, and, as they landed, the first ecstatic whimpers broke forth. In a moment it was full cry, discordant, beautiful, and soul-stirring, as the pack spread and sped, and settled to the line. I saw the absurd dazzle of tears in Philippa's eyes, and found time for the insulting proffer of the clean pocket-handkerchief, as we all galloped hard to get away on good terms with the hounds.

It was one of those elect moments in fox-hunting when the fittest alone have survived; even The Quaker's sluggish blood was stirred by good company, and possibly by the remembrance of the singing ash-plant, and he lumbered up tall stone-faced banks and down heavy drops, and across wide ditches, in astounding adherence to the line cut out by Flurry. Cruiskeen went like a book—a story for girls, very pleasant and safe, but rather slow. Moonlighter was pulling Miss Sally on to the sterns of the hounds, flying his banks, rocketing like a pheasant over three-foot walls—committing, in fact, all the crimes induced by youth and over-feeding; he would have done very comfortably with another six or seven stone on his back.

Why Bernard Shute did not come off at every fence and generally die a thousand deaths I cannot explain. Occasionally I rather wished he would, as, from my secure position in the rear, I saw him charging his fences at whatever pace and place seemed good to the thoroughly demoralised Stockbroker, and in so doing cannon heavily against Dr. Hickey on landing over a rotten ditch, jump a wall with his spur rowelling Charlie Knox's boot, and cut in at top speed in front of Flurry, who was scientifically cramming his mare up a very awkward scramble. In so far as I could think of anything beyond Philippa and myself and the next fence, I thought there would be trouble for Mr. Shute in consequence of this last feat. It was a half-hour long to be remembered, in spite of The Quaker's ponderous and unalterable gallop, in spite of the thump with which he came down off his banks, in spite of the confiding manner in which he hung upon my hand.

We were nearing Castle Knox, and the riders began to edge away from the hounds towards a gate that broke the long barrier of the demesne wall. Steaming horses and purple-faced riders clattered and crushed in at the gate; there was a moment of pulling up and listening, in which quivering tails and pumping sides told their own story. Cruiskeen's breathing suggested a cross between a grampus and a gramaphone; Philippa's hair had come down, and she had a stitch in her side. Moonlighter,

fresher than ever, stamped and dragged at his bit; I thought little Miss Sally looked very white. The bewildering clamour of the hounds was all through the wide laurel plantations. At a word from Flurry, Dr. Hickey shoved his horse ahead and turned down a ride, followed by most of the field.

'Philippa,' I said severely, 'you've had enough, and you know it.'

'Do go up to the house and make them give you something to eat,' struck in Miss Sally, twisting Moonlighter round to keep his mind occupied.

'And as for you, Miss Sally,' I went on, in the manner of Mr. Fairchild, 'the sooner you get off that horse and out of those wet things the better.'

Flurry, who was just in front of us, said nothing, but gave a short and most disagreeable laugh. Philippa accepted my suggestion with the meekness of exhaustion, but under the circumstances it did not surprise me that Miss Sally did not follow her example.

Then ensued an hour of woodland hunting at its worst and most bewildering. I galloped after Flurry and Miss Sally up and down long glittering lanes of laurel, at every other moment burying my face in The Quaker's coarse white mane to avoid the slash of the branches, and receiving down the back of my neck showers of drops stored up from the rain of the day before: playing an endless game of hide-and-seek with the hounds, and never getting any nearer to them, as they turned and doubled through the thickets of evergreens. Even to my limited understanding of the situation it became clear at length that two foxes were on foot; most of the hounds were hard at work a quarter of a mile away, but Flurry, with a grim face and a faithful three couple, stuck to the failing line of the hunted fox.

There came a moment when Miss Sally and I—who through many vicissitudes had clung to each other—found ourselves at a spot where two rides crossed. Flurry was waiting there, and a little way up one of the rides a couple of hounds were hustling to and fro, with the thwarted whimpers half breaking from them; he held up his hand to stop us, and at that identical moment Bernard Shute, like a bolt from the blue, burst upon our vision. It need scarcely be mentioned that he was going at full gallop—I have rarely seen him ride at any other pace—and as he bore down upon Flurry and the hounds, ducking and dodging to avoid the branches, he shouted something about a fox having gone away at the other side of the covert.

'Hold hard!' roared Flurry; 'don't you see the hounds, you fool?'

Mr. Shute, to do him justice, held hard with all the strength in his body, but it was of no avail. The bay horse had got his head down and his tail up, there was a piercing yell from a hound as it was ridden over, and Flurry's brown mare will not soon forget the moment when Stockbroker's shoulder took her on the point of the hip and sent her staggering into the laurel branches. As she swung round, Flurry's whip went up, and with a swift backhander the cane and the looped thong caught Bernard across his broad shoulders.

FLURRY'S WHIP WENT UP

'O Mr. Shute!' shrieked Miss Sally, as I stared dumfoundered; 'did that branch hurt you?'

'All right! Nothing to signify!' he called out as he bucketed past, tugging at his horse's head. 'Thought some one had hit me at first! Come on, we'll catch 'em up this way!'

He swung perilously into the main ride and was gone, totally unaware of the position that Miss Sally's quickness had saved.

Flurry rode straight up to his cousin, with a pale, dangerous face.

'I suppose you think I'm to stand being ridden over and having my hounds killed to please you,' he said; 'but you're

mistaken. You were very smart, and you may think you've saved him his licking, but you needn't think he won't get it. He'll have it in spite of you, before he goes to his bed this night!'

A man who loses his temper badly because he is badly in love is inevitably ridiculous, far though he may be from thinking himself so. He is also a highly unpleasant person to argue with, and Miss Sally and I held our peace respectfully. He turned his horse and rode away.

Almost instantly the three couple of hounds opened in the underwood near us with a deafening crash, and not twenty yards ahead the hunted fox, dark with wet and mud, slunk across the ride. The hounds were almost on his brush; Moonlighter reared and chafed; the din was redoubled, passed away to a little distance, and suddenly seemed stationary in the middle of the laurels.

'Could he have got into the old ice-house?' exclaimed Miss Sally, with reviving excitement. She pushed ahead, and turned down the narrowest of all the rides that had that day been my portion. At the end of the green tunnel there was a comparatively open space; Flurry's mare was standing in it, riderless, and Flurry himself was hammering with a stone at the padlock of a door that seemed to lead into the heart of a laurel clump. The hounds were baying furiously somewhere back of the entrance, among the laurel stems.

'He's got in by the old ice drain,' said Flurry, addressing himself sulkily to me, and ignoring Miss Sally. He had not the least idea of how absurd was his scowling face, draped by the luxuriant hart's-tongues that overhung the doorway.

The padlock yielded, and the opening door revealed a low, dark passage, into which Flurry disappeared, lugging a couple of hounds with him by the scruff of the neck; the remaining two couple bayed implacably at the mouth of the drain. The croak of a rusty bolt told of a second door at the inner end of the passage.

'Look out for the steps, Flurry, they're all broken,' called out Miss Sally in tones of honey.

There was no answer. Miss Sally looked at me; her face was serious, but her mischievous eyes made a confederate of me.

'He's in an *awful* rage!' she said. 'I'm afraid there will certainly be a row.'

A row there certainly was, but it was in the cavern of the ice-house, where the fox had evidently been discovered. Miss Sally suddenly flung Moonlighter's reins to me and slipped off his back.

'Hold him!' she said, and dived into the doorway under the overhanging branches.

Things happened after that with astonishing simultaneousness. There was a shrill exclamation from Miss Sally, the inner door was slammed and bolted, and at one and the same moment the fox darted from the entry, and was away into the wood before one could wink.

'What's happened?' I called out, playing the refractory Moonlighter like a salmon.

'FLURRY, I—I'VE LOCKED YOU IN!

Miss Sally appeared at the doorway, looking half scared and half delighted.

'I've bolted him in, and I won't let him out till he promises to be good! I was only just in time to slam the door after the fox bolted out!'

'Great Scott!' I said helplessly.

Miss Sally vanished again into the passage, and the imprisoned hounds continued to express their emotions in the echoing vault of the ice-house. Their master remained mute as the dead, and I trembled.

'Flurry!' I heard Miss Sally say. 'Flurry, I—I've locked you in!'

This self-evident piece of information met with no response.

'Shall I tell you why?'

A keener note seemed to indicate that a hound had been kicked.

'I don't care whether you answer me or not, I'm going to tell you!'

There was a pause; apparently telling him was not as simple as had been expected.

'I won't let you out till you promise me something. Ah, Flurry, don't be so cross! What do you say?——Oh, that's a ridiculous thing to say. You know quite well it's not on his account!'

There was another considerable pause.

'Flurry!' said Miss Sally again, in tones that would have wiled a badger from his earth. 'Dear Flurry——'

At this point I hurriedly flung Moonlighter's bridle over a branch and withdrew.

My own subsequent adventures are quite immaterial, until the moment when I encountered Miss Sally on the steps of the hall door at Castle Knox.

'I'm just going in to take off these wet things,' she said airily.

This was no way to treat a confederate.

'Well?' I said, barring her progress.

'Oh—he—he promised. It's all right,' she replied, rather breathlessly.

There was no one about; I waited resolutely for further information. It did not come.

'Did he try to make his own terms?' said I, looking hard at her.

'Yes, he did.' She tried to pass me.

'And what did you do?'

'I refused them!' she said, with the sudden stagger of a sob in her voice, as she escaped into the house.

Now what on earth was Sally Knox crying about?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DEER-STALKING

BY THE HON. A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY

THERE are some days and some events that can never be effaced from the memory. It is more than thirty years since that upon which I made my first futile attempt to shoot a stag; yet as I sit down to write, every detail of the long day seems fresh and vivid, and the memory which so often fails to recall events of far greater importance for once is not at fault. Let the reader go back with me to the beautiful valley of the North Esk, and a September morning in the early seventies.

I was then staying at Millden with the first Lord Cairns. We had had good sport with the grouse; but there were no red deer upon the ground, and my excitement was great when an invitation arrived from Lord Dalhousie to join in a deer drive in the adjacent forest of Invermark. Two of us were to go, and Lord Cairns and the elder members of the party waived their claims in favour of myself and a young nephew of our host. The start was to be an early one, as the rendezvous was at the Castle, seven miles up the glen, and we were to be there not later than eight o'clock. We were up and dressed soon after six, and seven saw us under way driving up the narrow glen by the road which winds along the valley within sight of the beautiful river. The North Esk is always a picturesque object in the landscape, but on this occasion its aspect was peculiarly wild and grand. Twenty-four hours of violent and almost tropical rainfall had

occasioned the heaviest flood that I ever witnessed during five years of visits to its neighbourhood, and it had risen more than ten feet and swept away nearly every footbridge along its course; while stooks and haycocks, whirled along by the turbid torrent, told a melancholy tale of devastation and ruin. The rain was still falling as the dogcart bore us towards our destination, but breaks in the sky promised better weather later in the day.

I suppose there are not many now who remember the Lord Dalhousie of that day, who received us at breakfast on our arrival, with old Horatio Ross, the father of my great friend, the first Queen's Prizeman, sitting beside him. Dalhousie was crippled with gout, his fingers being swollen and almost distorted; but he could still make good practice at driven grouse at a short range with a little 20-bore gun and a light charge. He ruled the glen with a rod of iron, and asserted and exercised rights over his tenants and labourers the mention of which would make the hair of the politician stand upright in these more democratic days. Needless to say he received us hospitably, but his first sentence was a sad damper to our enthusiasm. There could be no deer drive that day. The wind was wrong, and even if this obstacle had not been insurmountable, the swollen condition of the burns and rivers would have made it impossible to drive a large tract of country. Our disappointment and misery were apparent in our crestfallen faces; but dear old Ross soon reassured us. Of course we should have a stalk, and let us take it from him that it would be far better fun than the drive we had missed. A faint and perhaps not altogether sincere protest against his giving up his sport was offered; but he would not hear of our not having a day in the forest after we had come so far; and nine o'clock saw us tramping off, in charge of the stalker and a couple of gillies, for the first corrie, about five miles from the Castle.

The ponies stood saddled at the door, but we were told that we must do without them. Later in the day perhaps, if the weather cleared, it would be possible for them to follow us to the scene of action; but for the present they would only be a hindrance, as it would be impossible for them to ford even what on ordinary days were dry watercourses or shallow rivulets. The difficulty as to two going together was solved by the usual process of tossing for first shot, and fortune favoured me. On we splashed over bog and moor, often having to make a long circuit before we could cross any running water, large packs of grouse rising many gunshots away as we advanced. It had been a wild night, and they all had their heads up, quite ready to take alarm at

the slightest danger. It was bitterly cold and the rain had been sleet on the high hills; but we were warm enough with excitement and exercise, and welcomed the 'braw north-easter' as if we had been Kingsley himself. An eagle soared over the highest peak in the distance, and before we got to the spying place a small flock of ptarmigan ran along close to our feet, only taking to flight upon compulsion and under protest. At another time such objects would have filled us with excited delight, but to-day we were after our first stag, and any meaner creature seemed hardly worthy of notice. It seemed as though we should never begin the real sport of the day, although we had certainly lost no time in covering the ground on our way out. At last Donald reached a large rock just below the summit of the brae, overlooking a corrie, bounded on the opposite side by a steep and rocky hillside. With what eagerness we watched his impassive face as he made himself comfortable, steadied his glass with his stick, and took the usual deliberate survey of all the ground around him! We also did our best to spy; but the work was new to us, and we did not know where to look, or we could hardly have failed to find for ourselves the herd that was pointed out to us when our guide rose to his feet and shut up his glass with the unconcerned air which at that stage of the proceedings is part of the stock-in-trade of every stalker. There they were, nearly a hundred deer, as it seemed to me, scattered—too much scattered, alas!—over a green spot on the hillside opposite, not far from the summit level. There were some shootable beasts among them, and it would not be difficult to get within shot; but we must lose no time, as they were all standing up and moving about, very restless after the storm. There was no need to press us—we were young and in good training—and we dashed along after our leader, copying his every movement in the most approved style, rather sorry that we were allowed to remain erect, and could not ford a river or crawl through a bog, to show our zeal for the sport. I cannot honestly describe any moving incidents of the stalk. I have since had a good many days in the forest, but I hardly ever remember an easier approach. The wind was right, and all we had to do was to make a long détour, climb the back of the steep peak opposite, and come over the summit level under cover, right upon the deer which (as all know) are much easier to get at from above, than from below or on the level. It was a long walk and a stiff climb, but that was all, and we were soon looking down upon a forest of horns, breathless and excited, but hopeful. I shall never forget that sight: there were plenty of

OFF WENT THE WHOLE HERD, MORE FRIGHTENED THAN HURT

s
a
n
r
we
lea
rath
not
sport
stalk
hardl
and a
of the
cover, r
to get a
long wal
looking d
hopeful

stags well within shot, and to my unpractised eye all of them were, of course, quite big enough to kill. But such was not Donald's opinion: there were just one or two worth a shot, and the one he selected as the right beast was nearly on the outside of the herd, at least a hundred and fifty yards off. My airy confidence was rather shaken, but I was a fair target shot, and had done some execution among fallow deer and roe with the rifle, and was quite ready and willing to fire at the mark offered. Again I was stopped. The herd was moving uphill and I must wait till the beast came a good deal nearer. Meantime I could watch it and keep my sight upon it if I liked, until I was told to shoot. The loser of the toss also got his rifle ready, 'in case I missed,' and the period of suspense began.

I do not suppose we waited long, but it really seemed a century. The chilly wind whistled over the hill behind me, I gradually got colder and colder, and my fingers more and more benumbed; while the restless quadrupeds walked about without my particular stag coming appreciably nearer, although some of his companions must have been within fifty yards. By the time that I was told to shoot I do not believe that I could have hit a haystack, and, worst of all, my particular stag had got rather further instead of nearer. But it was now or never, as he showed every sign of an intention of going round the corner of a knob out of sight. Alas for the toss and the lucky penny! If this was to be the first shot I had far better have lost. However, bang went the rifle, off went the bullet—where Heaven knows—followed by a second from my companion's rifle, and off went the whole herd, more frightened than hurt.

Since then I have fired a good many shots at deer with fair success, but occasionally I have been guilty of misses which could only be described by the word disgraceful. It is a melancholy moment when a stag which you really ought to have made certain of with a bow and arrow gallops off unscathed; and the only thing to do is to bear the stalker's reproachful glances with resignation and own up to your shortcomings like a man. Depend upon it, in the smoking room in the evening you will be more pitied than condemned if you condescend to tell the absolute truth without excuse or evasion. 'Did you ever see such a miss as that?' said a relative of my own—one of the finest shots that ever handled a rifle—to the stalker, after letting off a stag broadside under a hundred yards in a good position, on a clear day, with every condition in his favour. 'Aye, I have, sir, mony a one,' was the reply, and there was no more to be said. But on

this occasion my disappointment was unmixed with any flavour of self-reproach. I did not expect to hit the beast, and indeed it would have been more or less of a fluke if I had. Moreover I solaced myself with the thought that if I had been allowed to shoot earlier, when I had wished to do so, the result might have been different.

Here I pause for a moment to discuss the question whether the advice invariably given by experts to beginners, to wait for a deer to rise, is always sound. There can of course be no doubt that a deer lying down presents a much smaller mark than one standing up and feeding; but I question whether the delay, often tedious and protracted, does not more than counterbalance this advantage. No doubt it is to some extent a question of temperament: a phlegmatic man may be able to contemplate a fine stag reposing at a short distance from his rifle for an hour or more with an absolute assurance of success; but for myself I always feel my confidence waning as time passes; and if the wait is a long one, I am very apt to disgrace myself when the critical moment arrives. I cannot, however, pose as an authority upon the subject. I have never rented a forest, although I have killed a fair number of stags in the course of my autumnal wanderings; and a rule so universally observed by the most skilful and practised sportsman must be right in the main. Personally, however, I would rather take an indifferent chance than wait an indefinite time, feeling my courage oozing out of my finger-ends all the time, and, where there was no one to say me nay, I have sometimes taken my own course with success.

But to return to my first day at Invermark. I had missed my chance, but all was not lost, and we started at once on a desperate attempt to cut off the herd which was heading at a gallop for the neighbouring corrie. Down we ran, leaping over peat hags and scrambling across boulders, and my companion duly scored his miss at the herd, still moving at a fairly long range, with even better excuse for failure than myself. It was a day of disappointment, and although we persevered till darkness closed in upon us, being desperately keen. At last we had to return empty-handed to a spot where the ponies were waiting for us. The burns had been running down all day, and, as soon as I had mounted, my gillie pointed to a ford in front of me which I proceeded to cross. Just as I got to the opposite bank I heard a cry of distress, and looking round saw that my unfortunate companion had been dislodged into the water. His pony had shown temper and kicked and bucked in the most inconvenient place. The gillie remarked

HIS RIDER WAS UNHURT, AND ONLY A LITTLE WETTER THAN HE HAD BEEN BEFORE

this occ
of self-
would
solaced
shoot e
been di

Her
the adv
deer to
that a
standin
tedious
advanta
ment:
reposin
with an
feel my
long on
moment
the subj
a fair n
and a
practise
however
indefinit
all the t
sometim

But
chance.
attempt
neighbo
scramble
miss at
better e
ment, an
being d
a spot
been run
gillie po
Just as I
looking r
lodged m
and buck

that it was always nasty if its stable companion was too far ahead of it; a warning which would have been more effectual had it been given before instead of after the catastrophe. His rider was unhurt, and only very little wetter than he had been before; but he preferred to walk the rest of the way, and it was past nine before we got back to the Castle and nearly midnight before we regained our quarters at Millden. I never remember a longer or harder day, for although I was in excellent training for walking I felt the next morning almost as stiff and sore as if I had been beaten with a club.

It was not until many years after that I got my first stag. My lines had fallen in pleasant places, but although every other species of Highland sport had been at my disposal, I had not found a second opportunity of going after the red-deer. All comes to him who waits, and at last I found my way to Braemore, the beautiful place of Sir John Fowler, a full description of which, with reproduction of drawings from the famous game book, appeared in the November number of this Magazine. No one but the great engineer, whose achievements in the field of his profession are the pride of his countrymen, could have planned and constructed the sportsman's paradise I then visited for the first time. When he bought his estate in Ross-shire, and considered where to build his house, he determined that it should stand sufficiently high to counteract the somewhat relaxing character of the climate, and should command a view of the strath and of the sea. At once he was assured that no such site existed. But with the giants of his calling there are no such things as impossibilities, and he simply marked on the ordnance map a spot on the side of the hill of the required altitude and situation. As the point selected was on a very steep braeside, 500 feet above the river and the road to Ullapool, it was not desirable to excavate a very large site, and Sir John contented himself with space for his house above, constructing the stables, garden, and offices 500 feet below with a beautiful winding road of three miles with an easy gradient to connect the two buildings from the upper of which a stone could almost be dropped upon the other. An unfailing water supply, perfect sanitary arrangement, and power for working machinery and making electric light, were provided by damming the burn above and making a little lake close above the house, just below the sanctuary in the heart of the forest below the peaks of Ben Dearig and Ben Lear. The high road to Garve naturally divides the forest into two beats, and when the wind is in the right quarter two 'rifles' ride together towards the

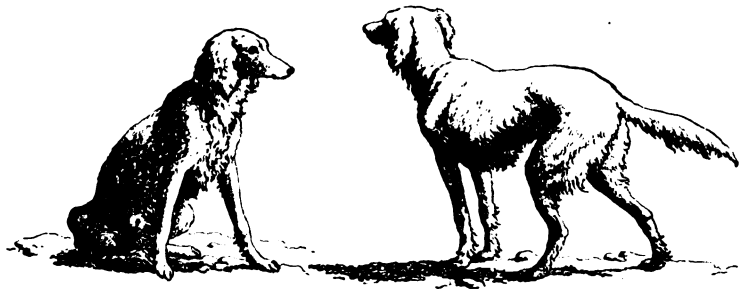
forester's house, and find, if they are in luck, that the stalkers and gillies who have preceded them have spied a stag by the time they reach their several destinations on either side of the highway.

The day contrasted favourably from the outset with the one previously described. The morning was brisk with just a touch of white frost, the wind was very nearly due north, and the mist was already nearly clear of the highest tops of the hills. As we jogged off together on our stout little Highland ponies our hearts were light and our hopes high. After we had ridden about three miles my companion turned off to the right across a ford of the river; and two miles further on I found McHardy the stalker and Rory the forester intently spying with their glasses at something across the summit level loch, while their two ponies were feeding by the wayside, and the gillies waiting beside them. Not many words were wasted. As soon as he saw me McHardy motioned to me to get off my pony, and strode off with my rifle under his arm in the direction of the boat-house, accompanied by one of his myrmidons, after a few Gaelic instructions to the others as to what was to be done with the ponies should fortune favour us. Had I possessed my present knowledge of his habits I should have augured well from his carrying the rifle, which he never condescended to do unless pretty near the deer. But it was not until we were in the boat and crossing the water that he pointed out to me a rock, not a mile off, where he had discovered a good stag, with some hinds and small beasts, without even leaving the road to go to the usual spying place. We had escaped the usual delay and annoyance of having to bale and launch a half-waterlogged boat. On every loch at Braemore the boats are suspended above the water in their houses by an easy arrangement of blocks and pulleys which a child could manage without difficulty. The stalk began soon after we had landed on the other side. The ground was rather flat, so that we had to crawl a good deal, and we were delayed more than once by the watchfulness of the sentinel hinds, which raised their heads and stared in our direction, as if they thought there was something amiss, while we, like St. Hilda's fossils, changed for the moment from serpents into stones, and breathed a supplication that we might escape notice. At last we reached a spot where there was no chance of their seeing us, and for a short five minutes I enjoyed the bliss of straightening my back and legs. A crouch and crawl, which could not have lasted a quarter of an hour, although it seemed an age, brought me to a heathery knoll, close under which I believed my stag to be lying; and my belief

was changed to a certainty when I saw McHardy take the rifle out of its cover, insert a cartridge, and, beckoning to me to follow, worm himself very slowly and cautiously up the little eminence. My heart thumped audibly as I came in sight of the stag lying down broadside within ninety yards of me with his head up, and after a whispered colloquy I was allowed to shoot at him as he was. A shot, a bound, a moment of sickening suspense, and he disappeared out of sight. Then came the glad certainty that the just crawling beast which I saw as I followed in pursuit could not possibly escape, although for caution's sake I rolled it over with another shot.

His head, a pretty little one of nine points, five on the right antler, is before me as I write, so I have no excuse for exaggeration. He scaled a little over fifteen stone clean, and was quite a creditable if not remarkable beast; but he was my first, and I would not exchange those horns for the finest trophy ever made in Germany. Fortune favoured me that day, as I got another rather larger one in the afternoon. But I have already occupied too much space to describe the incidents of this second stalk. As luck would have it, it gave me an experience of a different sort, as the deer were moving, and after a run to cut them off I had a few minutes' wait, and was then told to take the third stag out of a small herd which trotted past. My beast got the bullet fair in the heart, and rolled over stone-dead, after running on for about fifty yards as if nothing had happened.

Most of the above had been written before Sir John Fowler's death, which took place on Sunday, November 20, after a long illness borne with characteristic patience and fortitude. I am half tempted to tear it up, but let it stand as a tribute to one from whom I received many kindnesses. It is a strange coincidence that on the last day of the stalking season of 1897—the last its owner spent at Braemore—his favourite pony was killed by a curious accident. As the deer was being strapped on to it, it missed its footing on the side of a slippery brae; and as it rolled over the stag's horn penetrated its heart, causing instant death.



A BREVIARY OF DOGGES

BY F. H. H. GUILLEMARD

WHEN wrestling with Xenophon in our youthful days, perhaps wondering why on earth the classics were of such portentous dulness, it is probable that not one in ten of us knew that among that writer's productions was one of the most delightful treatises on hunting and the management of hounds that was ever penned. Of that work we do not intend here to speak, but a parallel case occurs to us as we turn the leaves of the book—the 'litle libell,' as the translator calls it—which forms the subject of this article. Its author, the learned Dr. Caius, writer of the 'De Arte Medendi' and a number of other weighty volumes long since buried in oblivion, is perhaps best known to the world at large, in these days at all events, as the second founder of the ancient college in Cambridge which bears his name. But of the many hundreds of alumni, graduate or undergraduate, who have trod the flags of its old courts, or looked upon the monument in the chapel, with its quaintly terse epitaph, '*Fui Caius*,' how many knew, or know, that he had the reputation of being an authority upon dogs? Yet so it was. He wrote his 'De Canibus'—'A Breviary of Englishe Dogges'—in the form of an epistle to Gesner, the great naturalist, and was greatly lauded therefor by the public of his day.

It is an extremely quaint work, so quaint and diverting, indeed, that one feels impelled to look up his 'De Ephemera Britannica,' a treatise on the sweating sickness, on the chance of its providing an equally rich treat. His 'History of the University' is certainly not devoid of humour, if only on the strength of his proof—to the satisfaction of himself at least, if not to that of all other good Cantabs—that the University was founded 394 years before the birth of Christ. But the 'Breviary of

Dogges' stands alone in this way, and though it doubtless owes much of its amusing nature to the translator, yet the dry humour of the learned Doctor leaks through it all. This, however, is only one feature of the book, which is of considerable interest and value as recording the various kinds of dogs known at that period in England, and the uses for which they were employed. How much Dr. Caius knew of dogs from his own personal experience and how much he learnt from that of his contemporaries, is a question we shall have to consider later.

Mr. Abraham Fleming, Student, by whom the book is 'drawne into Englishe' in 1576, commences it by what he terms a Prosopopoicall Speache, in which he proclaims himself, in poetry of a sort, to be not only a dog-lover but a dog-owner. From him we learn how the volume came to be written. Conrad Gesner, he says, 'a man whiles he lived of incomparable knowledge and manyfold experience, being never satisfied with the sweete sappe of understanding,' requested Dr. Caius to write a breviary or short treatise 'of such dogges as were ingendred within the borders of England,' which he eventually consented to do. Without this 'litle libell,' thinks the translator, 'an ignoraunt man woulde never have bene drawne into this opinion, to thincke that there had bene in England such variety and choise of Dogges,' and he highly commends the author for his work. The ending of the preface would seem to indicate that this was not Mr. Fleming's first literary effort, and that his earlier endeavours may not have been too favourably received. At all events, like certain lady novelists of the present day, he attempts to disarm his critics by having the first turn at them. 'As for such as shall snarr and snatch at the Englishe abridgement, and teare the Translatour, being absent, with the teethe of spightfull envye, I conclude in brevity theyr eloquence is but currishe,' and with this introduction, and a becoming Latin quotation, he hands his readers over to the author.

Caius—after telling Gesner that at some previous period he had written him 'a certayne abrydgement of Dogges,' but had withheld it as incomplete—loses no time in getting on to his subject, and starts with the following comprehensive classification:—

All Englishe Dogges be eyther of:

1. A gentle kinde, serving the game.
2. A homely kinde, apt for sundry necessary uses.
3. A currishe kinde, meete for many toyes.

With this we should have no cause to quarrel at the present day, except that fanciers would doubtless protest against having the objects of their care and skill in breeding classed under the third head. Dr. Caius, in a manner somewhat calculated to ruffle the feelings of Scotsmen, goes on to explain why it is that he calls all collectively by the name of English dogs—'as well because England, as it hath in it Englishe Dogges, so it is not without Scottishe, as also for that wee are more inclined and delighted with the noble game of hunting, for we Englishmen are adicted and given to that exercise and painefull pastime of pleasure, as well for the plenty of fleshe which our Parkes and Forrests doe foster, as also for the oportunitie and convenient leisure which we obtaine, both which the Scottes want.' What would he say if we could bring his shade back from the Elysian fields, and take him some time in early August to see the night mail starting for the North? Concerning Ireland and Irish dogs not a word is said; the relations between the countries were too strained to permit of much intercourse, and though the phrase 'No Irish need apply' may not have been current at that date, the sentiment it embodies was doubtless not unknown.

Taking the first division of his classification, our author subdivides them into two classes—the *Venatici*, or 'Dogges serving ye pastime of hunting beastes,' and the *Aucupatorii*, or 'Dogges serving the disporte of fowling.' With these it is, of course, that we are chiefly concerned, and of these it is that the longest descriptions are given.

The foxhound as we know him was in those days non-existent, and on the not very frequent occasions when the fox was hunted he met his death in sundry ways, as often as not nefarious, by what Caius terms the Harier. 'Wee may know these kinde of Dogges,' he tells us, 'by their long, large, and bagging lippes, by their hanging eares reachyng downe both sydes of their chappes, and by the indifferent and measurable proportion of their making.' But at the same time he admits such differences in them, even at that period, that it was impossible for them all 'to be reduced and brought under one sorte.' For the most part, it seems, these hounds were kept to hunt one special quarry, and that one only, whether the hare, fox, hart, otter, or badger, though to this rule there were exceptions. 'There be some,' he writes, 'which are apt[1] to hunt two divers beastes, as the Foxe some whiles, and other whiles the Hare, but

[1] The word is, of course, here used in its classical sense 'fitted for,' and hence 'used for,' not in its modern meaning of 'prone to.'

they hunt not with such towardnes and good lucke after them . . . for they swarve often times and doo otherwise then they shoulde.' We are carefully told that 'the Conny' is not hunted, but 'taken somtime with the nette and sometime with a ferret.'

The 'Terrar,' as he terms it, is accorded a place of honour after the hound, as 'he hunteth the Foxe and the Badger or Greye onely.' They get their name because 'after the manner and custome of ferrets in searchynge for Connyes, they creepe into the grounde, and by that meanes make afrayde, nyppe, and byte the Foxe and the Badger in such sort, that eyther they teare them in peeces with theyr teeth beyng in the bosome of the earth, or else hayle and pull them perforce out of their dark dongeons . . . or at the leaste through conceaved feare, drive them out of their hollow harbours, in so much as they are compelled to prepare speedie flight.'

The bloodhound rouses the learned Doctor to great enthusiasm. He is, indeed, so anxious to describe the wonderful powers of scent which the animal possesses, that he forgets to give any description of his appearance, except that he has 'lippes of large syze, and eares of no small lenght.' This species appears to have been used largely for the apprehension of poachers in the deer-forests. 'Albeit, peradventure it may chaunce (as whether it chaunceth sealdome or sometime I am ignorant) that a peece of fleshe be subtily stolne, and conningly convayed away with such provisos and procaveats as thereby all appearance of bloud is eyther prevented, excluded, or concealed, yet these kinde of dogges, by a certaine direction of an inward assured notyce & privie marcke, pursue the deed-dooers . . . . without wandring awry out of the limites of the land whereon these desperate purloyners prepared their speedy passage. Yea, the nature of the Dogges is such, and so effectual is their forsight, that they can bewray, seperate, and pycke them out from among an infinite multitude and an innumerable company.' It was the custom, apparently, to keep the bloodhound shut up in the dark during the day, 'to th' intent that they myght with more courage and boldnesse practise to follow the fellon in the evening and solitarie houres of darkenesse, when such yll disposed varlots are principally purposed to play theyr impudent prancke.' In tracking they were always 'drawne backe from running at randon with the leasse.' They will, he says, seldom take the water naturally, but when running a hot scent, 'all the kinde of them boyling and broyling with greedy desire of the pray, which by swymming

passeth through ryver and flood, plung amyds the water, and passe the streame with their pawes'—a feat which seems to the author so astonishing and abnormal as to call for some explanation of it on his part. 'This propertie,' he thinks, 'proceedeth from an earnest desire wherewith they be inflamed, rather than from any inclination issuyng from the ordinance and appoyntment of nature,' a sentence which from its phraseology and the conviction that it doubtless carries to the heart of every reader is almost worthy of Mr. Gladstone. He here drops an *obiter dictum* that all 'dogges that serve the game' differ much as to their habits of giving tongue. Some are mute, 'other some bewray the beaste immediatly by their importunate barcking, notwithstanding it be farre off many furlongs, cowchyng close in his cabbyn,' a performance which the learned doctor evidently does not approve.

The word greyhound, as most of us are aware, is said to be merely a corruption of the earlier English 'gazehound,' under which name the dog appears in this treatise. He is thus called, we learn, 'because the beames of his syght are so stedfastly setled and unmoveably fastened.' That one of the leading features of the breed is that they hunt by sight not scent is duly pointed out: 'He pursueth by the eye, and prevayleth litle or never a whit by any benefite of the nose.' It was at that period very much more common in the north of England than in the south, where the country was less open. Dr. Caius becomes rather puzzling when he goes on to say that 'there is another kinde of Dogge, which for his incredible swiftnesse is called *Leporarius*, a Grehounde, because the principall service of them dependeth and consisteth in starting and hunting the hare,' and describes him as 'a spare & bare kinde of Dogge.' It looks rather as if this was the commencement of the differentiation of the present breed and the present name. Caius distinctly says that the latter is only a contraction of the words degree hound—it 'being absolutely the best of the gentle kinde of houndes.'

Not much space is allotted to the 'Leviner,' except that we are told that it is 'a myddle kinde betwixt the Harier and the Grehounde,' and 'taketh its pray with a jolly quicknes.' This latter expression has a certain flippancy about it which rather suggests that the Doctor may have obtained the information from some sporting undergraduate of his college. On the 'Tumbler'—the lurcher of the medieval poacher—he is much more expansive. He holds him to be without a rival at catching rabbits and bringing them to his master, who awaits him hidden in some hedge or ditch. 'He will take in one dayes space as many

connyes . . . . as a horse can carry, for deceipt and guile is the instrument wherby he maketh this spoyle.' This 'deceipt and guile' he goes on to describe: 'They turne and tumble, winding their bodyes about in circle wise, and then, fearcely and violently venturing upon the beaste, doe soddenly gripe it at the very entrance and mouth of their receptacles or closets before they can recover meanes to save and succour themselves.' But this is only one of his many dodges: 'he useth another craft and subteltie, namely when he runneth into a warren, or setteth a course about a connyburrough [the translator surpasses himself in this word!], he huntes not after them, he frayes them not by barcking, he makes no countenance or shadow of hatred against them, but dissembling friendship & pretending favour, passeth by with silence and quietnesse, marking and noting their holes diligently, wherein (I warrant you) he will not be overshot or deceaved. When he commeth to the place where Connyes be of a certaintie, he cowcheth downe close with his belly to the ground. Provided alwayes by his skill and polisie, that the winde bee never with him, but against him in such an enterprise, And that the Connyes spie him not where he lurcketh. By which meanes he obtaineth the sent and savour of the Connyes carryed towardes him with the wind and the ayre . . . . and so provideth that the selly, simple Conny is debarred quite from his hole . . . . and fraudulently circumvented and taken.'

We now leave the *Venatici*, and pass to the second division of the dogs 'serving the game'—the *Aucupatorii*, or 'Dogges serving the disporte of fowling.' These are far more limited in number, in fact they comprise only the Spaniel and the Setter, although the former are somewhat unnecessarily divided up into various classes, such as 'Dogges for the Falcon,' 'Dogges for the Phesant,' and so on. However, as the author remarks, 'as though these kinde of Dogges came originally and first of all out of Spaine, the common sort of people call them by one generall word, namely Spaniells,' and no doubt they were all of this class. White, apparently, was their preponderating colour, though we are told that, if marked with any spots, they were commonly red. The liver spaniel and the black or 'blackishe' were also known, but were very rarely to be met with. The training of the dog varied with 'the byrde which by naturall appointment he is alotted to take,' but its main object was to teach him 'by often questing to search out and to spring the byrde for further hope of aduantage, or else by some secrete signe and privy token bewray the place where they fall.'

Of all this class, the 'water Spaniell or Finder, in Latine *Aquaticus, seu Inquisitor*,' is evidently held to be the most important, for he is separately treated of, and at greater length than all the others put together. He is described as 'somewhat bigge, and of a measurable greatnesse, having long, rough, and curled heare, not obtayned by extraordinary trades, but given by natures appointment. I have, friend Gesner,' continues the doctor, 'described and set him out in this maner, namely powlde and notted from the shoulders to the hindermost legges, and to the end of his tayle, which I did for use and customs cause that, beyng as it were made somewhat bare and naked, by shearing of superfluitie of heare they might atchive the more lightnesse and swiftnesse, and be less hindered in swymming, so troublesome and needelesse a burthen being shaken off.' Dr. Caius was thus the first person who took steps in the direction of the docking which now obtains. The spaniel, it should be remarked, was an especially useful dog to the sportsman of that day, as he was trained to retrieve his arrows and the bolts from his crossbow that had missed their mark. The cartridge of the medieval fowler was not only more cumbersome, but more expensive than that of his modern representative, and if he failed to bag his game he would, if without a dog, be rather hard put to it to mark down simultaneously both his bird and his bolt.

The setter was apparently always used with the net, in taking partridges or quails, and was very highly trained. 'When he hath founde the byrde he keepeth sure and fast silence, he stayeth his steppes and wil proceede no further, and with a close coverte watching eye layeth his belly to the grounde and so creepeth forwarde like a worme. When he approcheth neere to the place where the byrde is, he lays him downe, and with a marcke of his pawes betrayeth the place of the byrde's abode, whereby it is supposed that this kinde of dogge is called *Index*, Setter, being in deede a name most consonant and agreable to his quality. The place being known by meanes of the Dogge, the fowler immediatly openeth and spreedeth his net . . . which being done, the Dogge at the accustomed becke or usuall signe of his Master ryseth up by & by, and draweth neerer to the fowle, that by his presence they might be the authours of their owne insnaring.' This 'conning' is considered by Dr. Caius not so very astonishing, as the species is 'a creature domesticall, brought up at home with offals of the trencher.' We are not given any description of the points and appearance of the dog, which is unfortunate, as this must be one of the earliest mentions of the setter by name.

For the toy spaniel our author has a fine contempt, but it was almost as fashionable in those days, it seems, as it was a century later, when Charles II. divided his liberal affections between his lap-dogs and the ladies of his Court, and therefore in a professed treatise on dogs could not be omitted, though to them and to their mistresses the lash of the Doctor's sarcasm is unsparingly applied. He calls them the 'Spaniell gentle or Comforter,' and says that it is 'in the Ileland Melita, which at this day is named Malta, an Ileland in deede famous and renoumed with couragious and puisant souldiours valliantly fighting under the banner of Christ, where this kinde of dogges had their principall beginning. These Dogges are litle, pretty, proper, and fyne, and sought for to satisfie the delicatenesse of daintie dames, and wanton womens wills; instruments of folly for them to play and dally withall, to tryfle away the treasure of time, to withdraw their mindes from more commendable exercises, and to content them with vaine desporte—a selly shift to shun yrksome ydlenesse. These puppies the smaller they be the more pleasure they provoke, as more meete playfellowes for minsing mistresses to beare in their bosomes and nourishe with meate at bourde, to lay in their lappes, and licke their lippes as they ryde in their waggons. These kinde of people,' he continues, 'delighte more in dogges that are deprived of all possibility of reason then they doe in children that be capable of wisedome and iudgement. But this abuse, peradventure, raigneth where there hath bene long lacke of issue, or else where barrenness is the best blossome of bewty.' He says we may indeed wonder what is the good of these dogs, but the works of nature are so strange and her ways so 'covered with continuall and thicke clouds, that the eye of our capacities can not pearse through them,' and so we must not be surprised to find that they are excellent for weak and diseased persons to carry in their bosoms, 'for the disease & sicknesse chaungeth his place and entreth (though it be not precisely marcked) into the dogge.'

The second division of the work treats of dogs of 'the homely kinde apt for sundry necessary uses,' a classification convenient rather than scientific; for all considerations of breed are set aside. Nor is it by any means comprehensive, for such species as the turnspit are omitted, and classed somewhat unjustly under the head of curs. Dr. Caius, indeed, does not seem to trouble himself much about the accuracy of his scheme of classification, as long as he works through his list somehow. Thus the 'French Dogge,' which would seem to

most people to fall naturally under his final section of 'Outlandishe Dogges,' comes in as a sort of afterthought in the first division of those that 'serve the game,' although not thus employed; and the 'Fisher'—of which more presently—is placed among those which 'serve the disporte of fowling.'

The shepherd's dog is first dealt with, but, presumably because the subject is one which may be supposed to be familiar to all, the author, instead of enlarging upon it, takes the opportunity of discoursing at some length upon the subject of wolves, and how England was delivered of 'these noysome & pestilent beastes,' and passes almost at once to the 'Mastyve or Bandogge.' Upon these he waxes eloquent. 'Vaste, huge, stubborne, ougly, and eager, of a heavy and burthenous body,' they are 'terrible and frightfull to beholde, striking could feare into the harts of men.' At the same time, and for this very reason, they are among the most serviceable of all dogs to mankind, being employed for a multiplicity of purposes. Bull and bear baiting were very general all over England, and in this sport they were largely used. They were used too, we are told, both to take the fox and the badger; to drive wild swine out of meadows and orchards; to pin vicious bulls, seizing them by the ear, 'be the bull never so monsterous;' to act as messengers from place to place, letters being tied to the collar; to draw water from wells, being attached to a wheel, 'which they turne rounde about by the moving of their burthenous bodies;' and last, but not least in importance, to act as guardians of the house or homestead, 'for thieves,' we learn, 'rage up & down in every corner.' When the Doctor gets fairly away on the subject of thieves, which happens more than once, there is no stopping him, and one cannot help thinking that on some occasion or other he must have suffered at their hands, or he would scarcely be so very vigorous in his denunciation of them. In this instance he inveighs at great length against their numbers and their boldness. 'No place is free from them,' he declares, 'no, not y^e princes pallace, nor countreymans cotage.' Nor are their evil deeds the result of poverty; 'they steale to maintaine their excessive and prodigall expences in apparell, their lewdnes of lyfe, and their hautines of hart.' 'In these our develishe dayes,' he concludes, 'nothing can scape the clawes of the spoyler.' Under such circumstances it is small wonder that the mastiff was in such request, to 'strike could feare into the harts' of these gentry. One name for him, we are told, was the 'mooner,' because 'he wasteth the wearisome night season without slombering or sleep-

ing, bawing and wawing at the moone, a qualitie in mine opinion straunge to consider,' and one scarcely less annoying than the habits of the burglars, the Doctor might have added. He does not, however, for he has nothing but good to say of him, though he admits that occasionally he will 'most cruelly byte out colloppes of fleashe' from anyone who does not quite happen to meet with his approval. But, after all, as he says, what servant is more loving to his master, what companion more trusty, what watchman more vigilant?

When he comes to deal with his third and final class—'Dogges of a currishe kinde meete for many toyes'—Dr. Caius takes a high line, holding them to be entirely beneath his notice. He even changes the title, which in the earlier part of the book is as given above, for the less polite, but more forcible, 'Curres of the Mungrell and Rascall sort.' Of these, 'such dogges as keepe not their kinde, nor exercise any worthy property of the true, perfect, and gentle kinde, it is not necessarye that I write any more of them, but to banishe them as unprofitable implements out of the boundes of my Booke.' Of two only does he condescend to take any notice—the turnspit and the dancer—devoting only half a dozen lines to the first-named, and scarcely more to the latter. The turnspit could not at that period have become differentiated into the dachshund-like animal which we now know by this name, a type which must have been of much later evolution. In the middle of the sixteenth century it is probable that many kinds of dogs were used to turn the wheel. Caius denominates them 'curres of the coursest kinde, though in kitchen service excellent.' As for the 'daunser,' we find him an old friend under a new, or rather an unfamiliar name. He is the performing dog of our streets and music-halls, and was a familiar object in much earlier times even than these. Performing bears, too, can boast of an equal or even greater antiquity, but it is certainly astonishing to find Dr. Caius describing, not *quite* the Italian organ-grinder and the monkey, but something uncommonly like it. For he tells Gesner that, in company with their 'vagabundicall masters' who play upon divers instruments, these performing dogs or 'daunsers' pass through city, country town, and village, and 'carry apes on their shoulders in coloured iackets to move men to laughter for a little lucre.'

With this section the original list finishes, but not the book. That its writer should think it necessary to say a few words on foreign dogs, or, as he phrases it, make 'A Starte to outlandishe Dogges, not impertinent to the Author's purpose,' is only natural,

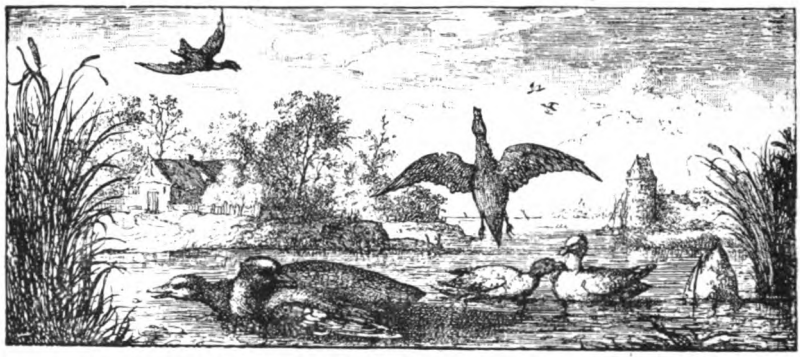
but it was perhaps a little unwise of him to adventure himself into the thorny paths of general natural history, especially in writing to such a really enlightened person as Gesner. In treating of the 'dogge called the Fisher' he barely avoids the pitfalls. He has heard that there is such a species, which 'seeketh for fishe by smelling among rockes and stones,' but in spite of the most diligent inquiry can learn nothing of it. However, as the otter is by some persons (he is careful to avoid the expression of his own opinion) held to be a fish, it is more than possible, he thinks, that the otter-hound may be looked upon as the 'Fisher' which he seeks to identify. A still more brilliant idea, however, occurs to him. Ælian, he remembers, calls the beaver *κύνα ποτάμιον*, the river-dog, and he is aware that this animal 'when fishes be scarse doth leave the water and raunge up and downe the lande, making an insatiable slaughter of young lambes until theyr paunches be replenished,' so it is also quite probable that this is the 'Fisher.' But he displays a physician's caution and slips out of the dilemma with praiseworthy adroitness. 'Albeit,' he says, 'so much be graunted, that this Beaver is a dogge, *yet it is to be noted that we reckon it not in the beadrowe of English Dogges!*'

The 'Starte to Outlandishe Dogges' does not take the author very far, though possibly far enough to puzzle readers of the present day. Under this heading, which only comprises the 'Iseland Dogge,' should certainly have come his 'French Dogge' of an earlier part of the book—'a newe kinde of dogge brought out of Fraunce, which bee speckled all over with white and black, which mingled colours incline to a marble blewe, which bewtifyeth their skinnes and affordeth a seemly show of comlynesse.' What can this have been? And what were the Iceland dogs 'of a pretty bygnesse, curled and rough al over, which by reason of the lenght of their heare make showe neither of face nor of body'? It is not easy to say, especially as in both cases the descriptions do not extend beyond the information above given. The fact is that, in spite of his wide travels in France and Italy, the Doctor was a typical Englishman, with a good, hearty contempt for things foreign, and took no great interest in matters canine if they were 'outlandish.' Indeed, he does not hesitate to express himself forcibly about people who are 'marvailous greedy gaping gluttons after novelties, and covetous corvorants of things that be seldome, rare, straunge and hard to get,' and gets quite indignant over the Iceland dog and its admirers: 'These curres, forsoothe, because they are so straunge, are greatly set by. A

beggerly beaste brought out of barbarous borders, from the uttermost countryes Northward we stare at, we gase at, we muse, we marvaile at, like an asse of Cumanum, like Thales with the brasen shanckes, like the man in the Moone.' The quaint old black-letter pages waft the echoes of his rage to us across the centuries.

The question of Caius's sources of information remains to be considered. Was the book merely a scientific excursus, a display of his erudition to Gesner and a mere piece of compilation, or was it a labour of love, undertaken with practical knowledge of the animals of which he treats? In the Caius College library there exist certain letters to the Founder from his great friend Richard Wyllyson, which perhaps throw some light on the matter. 'Of a truthe,' he writes in one of them, 'I must needes yet lawghe a little when I remember yor booke of Dogges. I wonder in God's name who made you a hunter and made you acquainted with gentlewomans little puppies.' This looks somewhat as if the Doctor had drawn on books rather than his own experience; but, on the other hand, we must not forget that he tells us how he cropped his spaniels' tails 'that they might atchive the more lightnesse in swymming,' so that presumably he must have been more or less of a sportsman.

Probably the book is an outcome of both sources, and he does not hesitate to tell us that he made diligent inquiry of 'huntsmen' anent certain points. No doubt some of the fellows and undergraduates of his college were quite capable of helping him in his task, and he may have got some of his information from the Mr. Bouncer of that day, who doubtless kept the medieval representatives of the immortal Huz and Buz at the 'Blew Boare' across the road, an ancient hostelry much patronised by the Tudor roisterer, and indeed not unknown to students of the Victorian era under the synonym of the 'Azure Pig.' But however it may be, we may say in Dr. Caius's own words, 'Of these, thus much, and thus farre, may seeme sufficient.'



THE BIRDS OF AN IRISH LOUGH

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY G. H. STORER, F.Z.S.

ANIMAL life, and especially bird life, seems on the whole much more abundant and approachable on an Irish lough than on the lakes and meres of England. Nor is the reason far to seek. For one thing, the wild creatures are much less frequently molested; and, moreover, many of the loughs are so surrounded by bogs and morasses as to be too difficult of access to tempt any but the most ardent lovers of nature. Yet all of these loughs are by no means thus uninviting; many, especially the smaller ones, are extremely beautiful—one in particular, a fairly typical Ulster lake, will always hold a very warm place in my affections. Bent like a bow, it lies fringed with woods, its limbs stretching away into the wild waste of bog and heather, where the snipe and the curlew breed; whilst to the north, beyond the alders and the pines, the narrow strip of green meadowland and the patch of brown bog, rises the rounded head of the solitary knoll which dominates and overlooks the whole. Thus backed by the furze-crowned hill, and encircled by the woods, this lovely lake becomes a perfect Paradise of bird life; the open water, the sheltered bay and reed-grown 'angle,' the tree-clad islet, the pebbly shore, has each its feathered tenants.

My first view of the lake was obtained one bright May afternoon. I had crossed from Holyhead in the night, had travelled by rail until noon, followed by a seven-mile drive in a jaunting car, and now, having crossed the meadow from my friend's

house, I passed between the trees and stood upon the shores of the lake, whose surface, unbroken by a ripple, shone in the sunlight like a sheet of burnished gold. A wild-duck leading her downy young among the shallows took fright on our approach, and anxiously summoned them to safety amidst the reeds. A heron croaked as he flew overhead. A couple of terns gracefully hung over the water, descending suddenly upon the surface when some little fish came within reach of their bills. Over the meadow four black-headed gulls sporting together in the air, sailing round each other in gradually ascending spirals, until they drifted out of sight. Coots called, a sedge bird sang energetically from the summit of a reed and darted upon a passing fly, whilst

THE SANDPIPER FLIES OFF

a sandpiper busily engaged in its search for insects ran briskly at the water's edge. Such was my introduction to the birds of an Irish lough.

The sandpiper is, I afterwards found, the most conspicuous bird on the shores of an Irish lough in summer-time. He is also perhaps the most interesting. Full of energy, his trim little figure haunts the margin of the water from April till September —for he is a bird of passage. As he trips along peering into the lurking places of his prey—chiefly aquatic insects, snails, and worms—his movements remind one of the wagtail similarly engaged; and he flirts his tail in much the same way, except that the sandpiper's tail is far the shorter of the two. Now and

then he probes like a snipe with his bill in the ooze, and apparently balances himself with difficulty upon his slender legs, especially when alighting from flight, for then you will observe that his body tilts slightly forward in an unstable manner—a peculiarity noticeable in many other wading birds. If we approach too near he expands his pointed wings, and, uttering his cry of 'Wink! wink! tiddly-wink, tiddly-wink,' rapidly reiterated, flies off, skimming above the surface of the water with a peculiar erratic flight, and forming a series of semi-circles as he alternately approaches and recedes from the shore. Whilst on the wing the sandpiper dips first to one side and then to the other, so as to exhibit by turns his white breast and dark back. This habit is also very characteristic of the sea-loving dunlin, and causes a company of these birds to present a beautiful sight as they expose their white breasts and dusky backs alternately to the sun.

Immediately on arrival in the spring, the sandpiper seeks a mate and selects a spot for his home; and it is amusing to notice how the shores of a lake will be parcelled out amongst different pairs of these birds, each pair usually confining itself to a limited stretch of strand, which it jealously guards from all intruders. The little headlands or capes which project into the waters of the lake are favourite places, and it is rare to find one which does not possess its pair of tiny tenants.

The sandpiper is a gallant wooer and will fight pluckily to obtain possession of the lady of his choice. On one occasion I had shot a female, and on going down to the lake next evening I perceived two males engaged in fight, whilst a female, evidently the 'Queen of the Tournament,' sat, quite unconcerned, upon a stone watching the conflict. One of the males was undoubtedly the widower of the 'dear departed,' and he, being convinced like Miles Standish that it was not well for him to live alone, had straightway made war upon the monarch of a neighbouring cape, with intent to rob him of his bride. So engrossed were all three with the matter in hand, the males every now and then leaping into the air, their white breasts and bronzed backs gleaming in the sunlight, whilst they struck at one another with their bills, that I was able to approach quite close to them. Selecting the finest male, I fired, but what was my surprise to see the three birds fly off, the males still fighting as they flew, until they were too far off to be perceived. About a quarter of an hour afterwards, I was walking along the lakeside in the direction in which the sandpipers had gone, when a prolonged and mournful

'We-ep! we-ep!' fell upon my ears, and looking around I noticed one of them upon a rock just above the surface of the water. At the same time I observed what I took for the fin of a fish move near the stone, on the side farthest from me, and going nearer I found the body of the sandpiper at which I had fired floating dead upon the water. The female had accompanied her mate to his last resting-place, and I had arrived just in time to hear her bewail her loss! I am happy to be able to say that the story does not end here, however. A few days afterwards I revisited the scene of the sandpipers' conflict, and to my surprise found a couple of sandpipers occupying the spot; so it

GREY WAGTAIL IN WINTER DRESS

appeared that the widow and widower had paired and each had sought consolation in the other's company.

As we walk along, a sandpiper suddenly springs up a yard or two before us, and, after fluttering a little distance in a manner which suggests a broken wing, finally flies off over the lake. We have seen these tactics before; the mother lapwing thus seeks to lure us from the neighbourhood of her beloved eggs, the wild-duck thus decoys one from her helpless young. Can there be a nest? Here it is. Half hidden beneath the trunk of a fallen tree we find a little hollow amongst the pebbles lined with moss, and upon this slight structure lie three beautiful pear-

shaped eggs, large for the size of the parent bird, of a yellowish-white ground colour, spotted and streaked with different shades of brown.

Passing into the belt of trees which encircle the lake, our attention is speedily arrested by the repeated cries of 'Ip-hee!

HERON—ADULT MALE

ip-hee!' proceeding from the pine-branches over our head. These are the call-notes of a little party of coal-tits, who in their search for food can yet find time to indulge in the most amusing acrobatic feats amongst the branches. Whilst one on vibrating wing examines the extremity of an outstanding twig, another

hangs head downwards hammering at some bark-crevice with his short bill, a third swings round the branch in a species of avine somersault; indeed, every act possible or impossible to the professional wire-walker is successfully accomplished by these midget performers in the pine-branches. I found the haunt of some of these tits in the half-decayed limb of an old birch-tree, and on trying to peer into the hole disturbed the whole family, and out they came in a great fluster, the young birds, owing to the downy state of their plumage, appearing slightly larger even than the parents. The colours also of the young birds differed from those of the adults; for where the latter were white and black, the youngsters were pale yellow and grey, with the markings much less clearly defined.

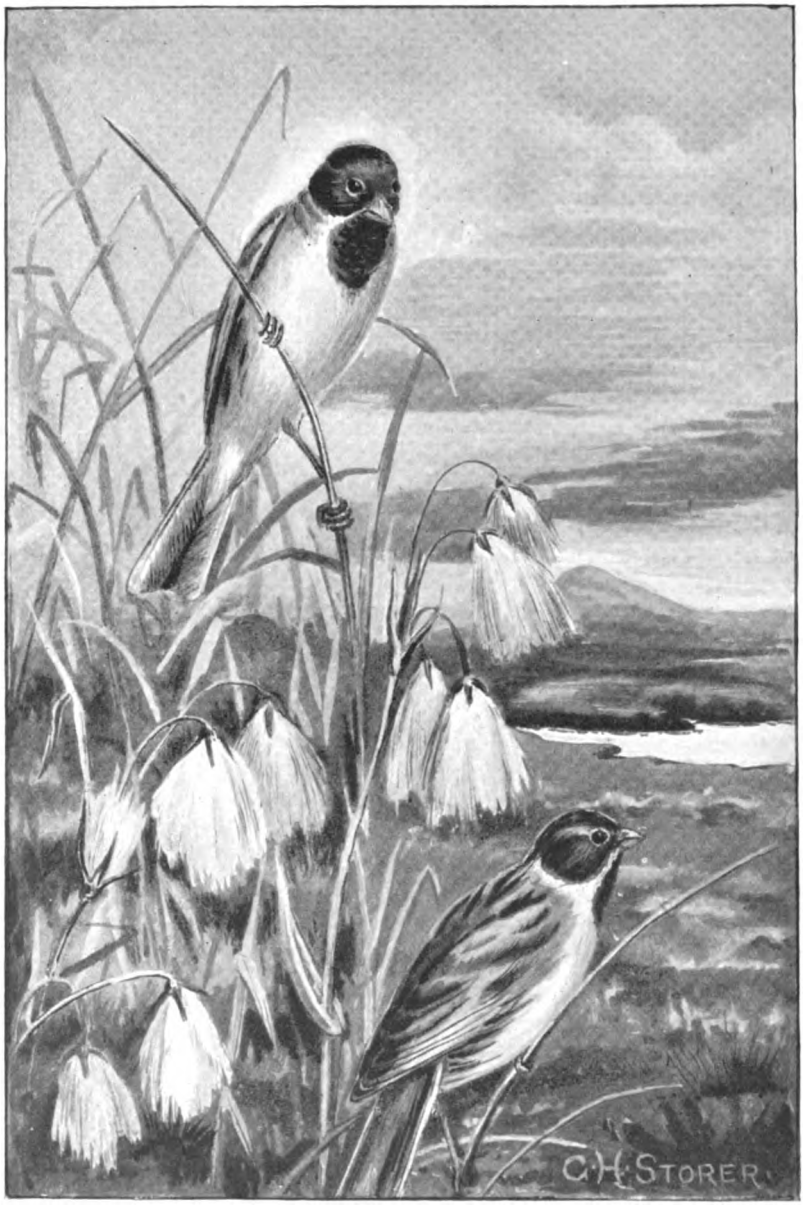
A MOORHEN CHICK

Besides the coal-tit, the blue and the great tit also frequent the pine-trees, but the coal-tit is pre-eminently the pine lover, penetrating where the trees are thickest and the shadows deepest, and seeming most at home where his voice alone breaks the stillness of the wood. In winter the troops of tits are joined by companies of redpoles and siskins, who especially affect the alders, and are sometimes accompanied by goldfinches, when the latter forsake the thistle-heads for a forage amongst the alder-catkins.

A common bird of the lough-side is the grey wagtail. The black and white pied wagtail is also frequent, but the graceful grey—perhaps the most elegant of a very elegant family—seems far more plentiful in Ireland than in most parts of England, and in the north of Ireland does not confine itself to wild, rocky, or

moorland country, as it so often does with us, but is a bird of the village, running fearlessly along the road, perching unconcernedly on the roof-ridge of the old thatched cottages as familiarly as it haunts the stream-side or the lough. It nests, too, often in exposed situations, a favourite site being a hole in the old stone pier on the lake. In England it is partially migratory, but it appears to be a permanent resident in Ireland, as it is plentiful at all seasons of the year. I noticed a tendency towards sociability on the part of the grey wagtail in winter. A number of them would be seen as evening fell flying over the tops of the pines and then plunging almost vertically into the reed-beds, where they couched for the night.

On walking by the lake one would frequently disturb the stately heron at his lonely post on some grey stone as he watched the shallows for approaching fish, or a coot or moorhen surrounded by her dusky chicks. Among the reeds rails ran and glided mouse-like into safety, whilst in the adjoining meadows crakes sounded their harsh notes day and night. Mallards, teal, terns, gulls, and even shags were plentiful; one could often see the latter flying high in the air with outstretched necks like giant long-tailed ducks, until they alight amongst the tree-clad slets of the lake. Comical little dabchicks splashed and dived in the sheltered bays, but the bird I loved most to watch was the great crested grebe. I remember, too, how the spirit of the young collector was stirred within me, for this grebe was then a desideratum in my collection, and I had hitherto sought such a specimen in vain. Now seemed the time when I could fill in the blank. However, it had not been so written. For all I did that grebe might have graced his native lake to this day. Now the grebe is anything but a sociable creature, and is wild and wary in the extreme. At most but three or four pairs will be found on a lake, and these will generally be seen well out in the open water at a perfectly safe distance from the shore, and to attempt to pursue such marvellous swimmers and divers with a boat would be absolutely useless. However, by careful watching I found out that one pair of grebe haunted in the early morning a certain sequestered 'angle' of the lough—a bay much frequented by spawning bream. Here was my chance. Behold, then, our two sportsmen—for my friend must needs come to see the fun—silently approaching the angle. One of them now stands stock still, as motionless as the tree behind which he is hidden; the other with gun on full-cock glides towards the shore, swiftly and silently, eyes and ears anxiously alert, taking care also that his



REED-BUNTING AND COTTON GRASS

approach is well covered on the front. Splash! A slight sound enough, but it is heard, and eighty yards away appear the long body, slender graceful neck, and magnificent head of the grebe for whom we seek. He wears his wedding favours. Horns of long feathers adorn his head; his face is margined by a gorgeous black-edged chestnut frill. Our sportsman feels his heart leap within him. His fingers nervously touch the trigger; with difficulty he restrains a mad desire to fire, although the bird is looking full upon the shore. Seeing everything quiet, the grebe dives and resumes his fishing. Our friend with a smart run

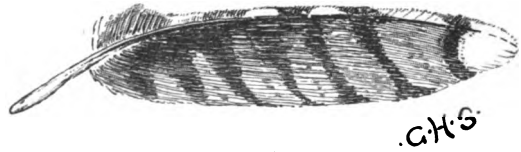
PARTRIDGE

quickly gains the tree in front of him, just as the bird returns to the surface. Another minute's motionless waiting, and then another run. Thus he continues until the tree nearest the lake is reached. Once more the bird appears, and immediately our friend takes quick but careful aim and fires. Patter go the shot upon the water, but the grebe has dived, and a minute afterwards we have the sorrow to behold him two hundred yards or more out on the lake, as he gazes quickly round upon his foes before he dives again. Our sportsman had been told that the grebe dives at the flash of the gun, and when the shot strikes the water

its powerful feet have carried it beyond the reach of harm, and as he watches that lovely creature, who can blame him if he really thinks it does?

I had tried and failed, but a few months afterwards I received two parcels from my friend, and upon opening them was delighted to behold the male and female grebe—still very beautiful, but in their winter dress, with shorter crests and narrower frills than those they carried earlier in the year. One was straightway preserved and mounted, and a few weeks later returned as an ornament to the hall of the house which overlooks its native lake; the male still graces the cabinet of him who once attempted unsuccessfully to shoot it. And so the blank was filled in after all.

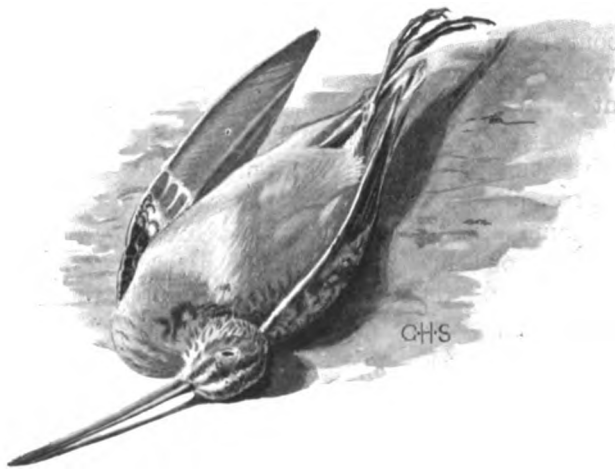
On the low-lying land near the lake, and especially on the bog through which the river flows on its way to the lough, snipe were abundant, and amongst the clumps of rushes reed-buntings perched and nested, the black heads and white breasts of the



OUTER TAIL FEATHER OF A SNIPE

males being almost as conspicuous as the lovely tufts of cotton-grass which waved their silk-like heads above the waste. As snipe were plentiful, I spent much time during the early summer in studying their habits, and especially in trying to satisfy myself as to the means by which the male snipe produces the 'drumming' or 'bleating' which one so frequently hears during the breeding season. I soon convinced myself that the sound does not proceed from the mouth or vocal organs, as it is only produced when the bird is gliding through the air, and never, so far as my observations have gone, when perching or at rest upon the ground. In this I think all observers will agree. There remain the wings and tail as possible agents in sound production. Now, if the snipe be carefully watched, it will be noticed that after he has soared to a considerable height in the air he will suddenly begin to descend, with half-closed wings and wide-spread tail, in an oblique direction towards the earth. This is the moment when the snipe beats his wonderful 'drum.' The sound does not at all suggest the 'whuz! whuz!' produced by the

vibrating pinion feather of the flying swan or the 'whirr' of the startled partridge or pheasant, as their wings beat the air; neither is it made by clapping the wings back to back like the rising wood pigeon, or by striking the sides of the body after the manner of the American ruffed grouse. In fact, I do not imagine that the wings can in any way be considered the musical instruments. Rather is the apparatus to be looked for in the tail. Examine the outer tail feathers of a snipe, and you will see at once that the shaft is strong and bent like a sabre, and that the outer web is stiff and very narrow, whilst the inner web is broad. Pluck out one of these feathers and fix it upon a stick. Now move the stick quickly, so that the stiff outer web strikes the air obliquely as did the tail of the bird in life, and you will obtain a good if not very powerful imitation of the snipe's 'bleat.' The drawing on p. 642 is a careful representation of this modified tail feather, and is of the exact size.



A SNIPE

Digitized by Google

MY ELEPHANT

BY CAPTAIN W. R. BINDLOSS

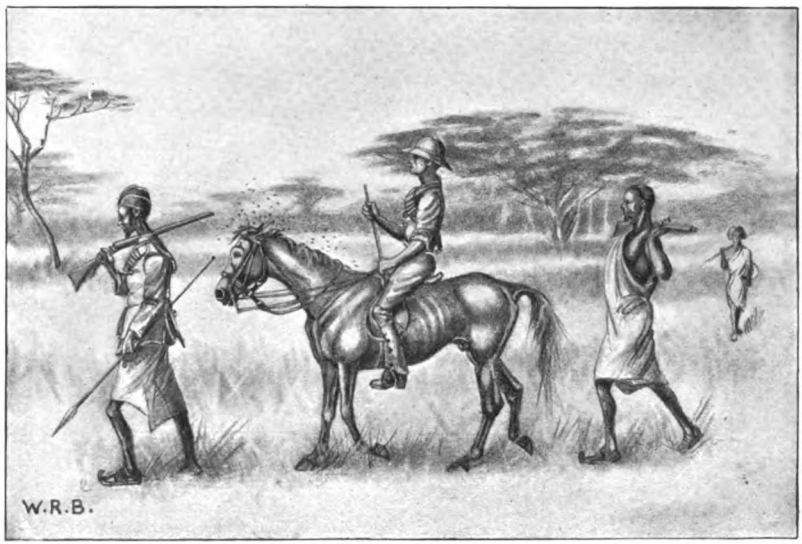
SHALL I ever forget my first and up-to-date last view of wild elephants? I don't think so. I was riding sadly, and perhaps rather sleepily, along, for the day was hot and my luck was out, Abdi leading, tastefully clad in an old kharki jumper and gunner fatigue cap, late the property of some gallant bombardier at Aden, with my trusty little 450 over his shoulder, as was his wont. Behind came honest Arden with the 'Bara Bundook,' followed by my syce and the old guide. I was feeling distinctly depressed, as after about a fortnight spent unsuccessfully after elephant near the river Webi, I was at last forced to turn back to keep my appointment with a brother officer at Sagak, where we had pitched our standing camp a month before. Already I had put off my march back from day to day, tempted by the numerous fresh traces of elephants in the vicinity, and hoping against hope that I might come across them, till at last I had barely time to reach our rendezvous by the appointed day, even by forced marches, which would render all sport out of the question. I rode dismally along, cursing my luck and relieving my feelings by cutting viciously right and left with a switch I carried amongst a buzzing swarm of flies, which, hanging like a cloud above my unfortunate pony's head, had for the last few days added one more discomfort to an existence which want of water had already rendered sufficiently burdensome.

Alas! my poor pony! It robbed me of half my pleasure to see his hollow flanks and wistful eyes.

Again I cursed my luck. Why on earth—earth was not the word I used—had I been such an idiot as to go pushing on so far into the interior on less than four months' leave, just to get an infernal elephant, neglecting many a golden opportunity of adding

scarcely less desirable trophies to my bag. How I regretted the many districts I had hurriedly traversed, which, if abundant spoor of lion, rhino, &c., goes for anything, would have well repaid me for a more lengthy sojourn. However, it was too late to regret a bad 'bundobust,' and a delicate spray of wait-a-bit which wandered caressingly across my face at that moment and added two or three more to the numerous scratches already adorning my expressive features, effectually dispelled my day-dream.

How hot and drowsy the day was! Not a sound broke the stillness save only the low droning of myriads of insects busy amongst the sweet-smelling blossoms of the mimosas. Not a



I RODE DISMALLY ALONG

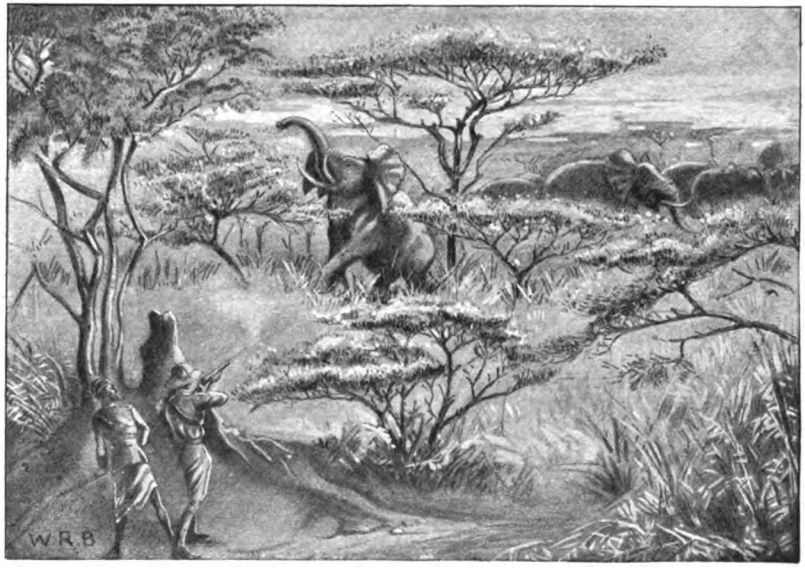
sign of life, except now and then a startled squirrel which scuttled across our path. As we topped a piece of rising ground I could see, rolling away like billows into the far distance, mile after mile of scrub and acacia shimmering in the heat, broken only far away by here and there a silver streak or glint of light, where lay the Webi, her deep pools alone in that land of dryness still defying the fierce rays of the summer sun. We were traversing a thick tract of bush, almost amounting to a forest, composed chiefly of large mimosa trees, with a dense undergrowth of scrub and wait-a-bit thorn, and had inclined considerably to our right in obedience to a few muttered words from the old guide, who fancied he had

heard something. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, I found myself almost dragged from my pony, my 8-bore thrust into my hand, a few low, fierce words hissed out in tones of intense excitement, in Somali, and the next instant I was doubling through the scrub like a rabbit in the wake of faithful Abdi. On we dashed, tearing through the thorny scrub, my heart going like a sledge-hammer, quite as much from the wild excitement caused by the magic word 'Elephant,' which Abdi murmured into my ear, as from distress; though running through the thick bush with a heavy rifle is in itself no joke. We had doubled best pace for about a quarter of a mile, when I became aware for the first time of a crashing sound to our left front, and the next moment, about thirty yards away, swinging along amongst the mimosa, I saw my first herd of wild elephants. Even now, as I write, though the impression has had some years to wear off, I feel quite cold again with some remains of the intense excitement and emotion which I felt then. There always seems to me something unreal in the sight of any great game viewed for the first time in its native wilds. There he is, the animal one has pictured to oneself, and read of and longed for ever since as a boy one devoured one's first book on 'Shikar;' and yet, when the moment at last arrives, and the great brute stands there in the flesh, there seems something unreal, something almost too good to be true!

But there they were, and as they crossed our front at about thirty yards, we turned and ran along parallel to them. They saw us at once, for as I panted along they kept turning towards us, their great ears spread—indeed, they gave me the impression of being all ear—and peering at us with their little suspicious eyes. There they went, about twenty of them, big and little, crowding together like a flock of sheep, but going a good deal faster than your humble scribe, whose running, to be quite honest, is not his strong point, and who by this time was just about cooked. Half a dozen times I paused, and, blinded with dust and sweat, tried vainly to take a steady aim at some huge-tusked cow, towering above the rest, as she passed some gap in the jungle; and every time, before I could bring the sights of my heavy swaying rifle to bear on her mighty shoulder, she was gone amongst the trees and scrub, till five big ones had passed, and suddenly the sickening thought flashed through me that I could run no more—that I had had my chance and missed it. But, the gods be praised! last of all, and as though driving the herd before him, came the bull.

A monster he looked, with his great curved white tusks standing out a yard beyond his trunk. As he came opposite to me he half

turned, raising his great ears, and, quick as thought, I gave him a shot behind the shoulder. The great brute swung round with a scream of pain and rage, lashing savagely at the wound with his trunk, and on receiving my second barrel, went down with a mighty crash, sending a great cloud of yellow dust up to the heavens. On the shot the herd stopped dead, and three or four cows wheeling round came trotting towards us, ears raised and trunks lowered, and, Abdi seizing me by the arm, we dived among the bushes. However, losing sight of us, they crashed away again, and hastily cramming fresh cartridges into my rifle, we turned



I GAVE HIM A SHOT BEHIND THE SHOULDER

and ran after them, passing my bull within two yards as he lay, a mighty bulk, amongst the crushed trees and the bushes. Urged on by Abdi's keenness rather than by the wild hope of adding another to my bag, I was soon on the track of the now thoroughly alarmed and fast retreating herd, but though I ran myself to a standstill, I never got another shot at them. At last (quite exhausted) I threw it up and commenced slowly retracing my steps, done to a turn, but with a heart full of joy and triumph, to where I had left the dead bull, being stopped repeatedly by the way to receive the fulsome congratulations of Abdi, who, either overcome with admiration of my prowess as a hunter, or

possibly in anticipation of promised 'backsheesh,' insisted on shaking me heartily by the hand every hundred yards or so.

Long before we got near the place where I knew I had left my bull lying, I began peering anxiously amongst the trees for the first glimpse of his great carcass. Judge then of my intense disgust when, on suddenly emerging on the little open space where I had last seen him, I found two wildly gesticulating Somalis—a large pool of blood and—no elephant! In a few hurried words they poured into our horrified ears the tale of the catastrophe. Hardly (according to their account) had we left him five minutes, when the unsportsmanlike brute had shown signs of life, and taking a mean advantage of my absence (and in spite of prodigies of valour displayed by both of them), had struggled to his feet and made off, carrying with him a choice collection of spears, mute but indisputable evidence of their strenuous efforts in my service.

It was no time for words. Scarcely waiting to swear, I again took up the chase. There was no difficulty about this. A runaway traction engine might have been excused for feeling jealous could it have gazed upon the track made by the great wounded brute in his first mad rush. It fairly made one's hair stand on end—or it would have done so if my head hadn't been shaved—to see how he had for the first quarter of a mile crashed through bushes and into trees, tumbling in and out of a dried-up water nullah (more like an Irish chaser or an Indian pig than the most ponderous beast that walks the earth), and leaving great splashes of blood on both sides of his spoor. On we went at a steady double, peering anxiously ahead in momentary expectation of seeing our mighty quarry in front of us. Never for a second did I doubt our ultimate success. I had seen the dust fly from the place where I had hit him—right behind the shoulder, and a heavy steel-tipped conical bullet driven by twelve drachms of powder is no laughing matter. He was mine--mine as sure as if I had cut his tusks out. Only I rather wished that I had sat on his head when I had him down and been satisfied, instead of allowing Abdi to rush me off after the others.

The bull, after the first half-mile, had evidently slowed down to a steady walk. On we went. Gradually we slowed down to a walk too. Well I remember how my first glad certainty of coming upon him standing at any moment gradually gave way to a doubt whether, after all, it was not to be a rather longer chase than I at first expected, but not for many a weary mile would I admit the horrible thought, long kept back, that perhaps

I should not get my elephant after all—that perhaps I was never going to set eyes on him again. Why go into the details of our fruitless chase? Every man who has done a certain amount of big game shooting has probably experienced the bitterness of some similar disappointment. Mile after mile we trudged wearily on, going slower and slower, hoping against hope, till at last the bull cut off the spoor of the remainder of the herd. Then at last we halted to consider the situation.

Much as I hated the thought of giving up the chase, Abdi's wiser counsels prevailed. The position was unpleasant. We had had no water or food for many hours and I personally was terribly thirsty. There was no possibility of getting either nearer than the caravan, which by this time was many miles away, and I had lost my pony and syce when first we came upon the herd. Had the bull only kept by himself, I would have still tramped on in hopes of his stopping sooner or later and giving me a shot; but having once got on the track of his comrades I knew that he would probably keep going till he dropped. So I threw it up. I sat down. Oh, the bitterness and despair of that moment! People may laugh, but in my first feeling of sickening disappointment the whole world seemed a blank. All the joys of the grandest of sport, and surely big game shooting of all sports is the grandest, seem at the time scarcely to atone for the bitterness of such moments as these. I *had* felt so cock-sure of him! If I had had any moisture to spare I almost think I could have cried.

Slowly and sadly we began our long tramp back. The caravan had been going in an entirely opposite direction to that taken by the herd, and we knew it must be by this time many miles away and were not quite sure in which direction. Our only plan was to retrace our steps by the spoor. Late in the evening we reached the spot where we had first come upon the herd. Though it was by this time very cold, I halted here for an hour or two until the moon rose and then continued our march. As long as the caravan track kept across fairly open country, we were able to follow it without much difficulty at a good round pace, helped by the bright light of a glorious moon which had by this time risen high in the heavens. But soon, getting amongst a good deal of grass and scrub, we lost the track again and again, till at last in despair I sat down and swore that nothing should induce me to move another yard. Hungry and thirsty though I was, I determined to spend the night where I stood rather than drag myself wearily along any further on what

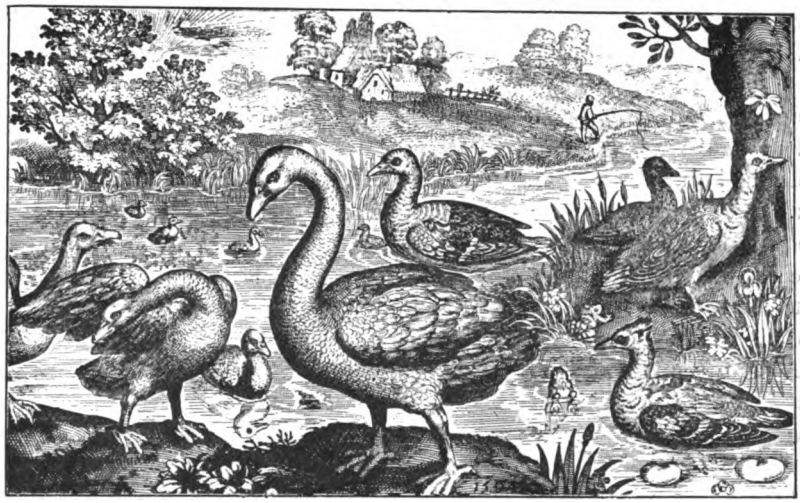
seemed a hopeless quest. I sat down and lit my pipe. My poor boys stood round eyeing me disconsolately. A Somali above all things hates sleeping in the open. I began to feel terribly cold. Suddenly, away on our right, the dark horizon was cleft by a bright flash of fire, followed an instant later by the distant report of a gun.

Hurrah! Up I jumped with renewed hope. I fired the 450 in answer, and we set off in the direction in which the welcome flash had appeared. In less than an hour my ears were gladdened by a holloa quite close in front, and coming suddenly over the edge of some rising ground I saw my much longed for camp fires in a snug little hollow less than half a mile away. And right glad was I to see them—as were my men too I expect.

By good luck, my syce, on losing us when we first came upon the herd, had ridden on and caught up the caravan and stopped it. So the camp was nearer than we expected. Within ten minutes I was absorbing cold—and extremely muddy—tea as if my life depended on it. For a few glorious moments even my disappointment was drowned in that mighty drink. I was too tired to be very hungry. After a hasty meal, consisting chiefly of rice and dates, which somewhat unsatisfactory food was about all that remained—for some days I had shot no meat for fear of disturbing any elephants in the vicinity—I tumbled into bed.

The next morning we struck camp early and continued our march to Sagak. Since then—with the exception of a small herd, which winded my camels half a mile away—I have never set eyes on a wild elephant. In spite of all Abdi's philosophical, and not very original, remarks about 'Kismet,' it was many days before I could reconcile myself to my bad luck—or bad management—as perhaps the reader will say.

Still, life is long, and I am fairly young, and I hope before I die to again try conclusions with the wily 'hathi.' But though I should kill fifty—which I certainly do not desire, and which in these degenerate, shot-out days is, to say the least of it, extremely unlikely—I shall always be one short. And, though I slay the mightiest bull between here and the Cape, I shall never believe him equal to the one I lost, whose great white tusks have probably ere this been hacked out by some band of wandering Abyssinians, and whose mighty bones lie bleaching beyond the Webi.



A DAY ON A MOORLAND TROUT STREAM

BY RUSSELL RICHARDSON

THE picturesque country for some miles north of Scarborough probably owes most of its beauty to the many little streams which, rising on the moors, flow quickly down to the sea, each through a peaceful little valley of its own, in which the birds vie with the rippling waters in making the air musical.

Each of these tiny streams abounds in trout, which, though small, undoubtedly make up for what they lack in size by the rare delicacy of their flavour. Small they certainly are, averaging but about two and a half ounces, though a quarter-pound fish is not uncommon, and the writer had the pleasure, on one occasion, of taking a fine trout which weighed within a quarter of an ounce of half a pound. This, however, was an exception which one hardly expects to repeat. Therefore the angler must not go to these streams expecting to fill his creel with big fish, or he will be disappointed. But a man whose enjoyment of a day's angling does not wholly depend on the size of the fish he may take, but who finds a healthy pleasure in being in the open air, surrounded by beautiful scenery, taking an interest in each entertaining object which kindly Dame Nature will place in his way, and content with modest sport, will never regret a day spent on one

of these little trout streams; and as he becomes familiar with their many beauties he will soon learn to love them.

Possibly the chief charm about fishing a stream of this description lies in the fact that you can, without undue fatigue, fish the whole of it in a day, an experience which would no doubt be unique with the great majority of anglers. And this is no exaggeration; the angler may start at the mouth of the stream where it flows into the sea, and, its ever-changing character preventing all fear of monotony, he may fish right up to its source on the moors—possibly not more than five miles—coming upon trout all the way. But I am anticipating, and as it is my intention to invite the reader to accompany me on a day's angling, we will lose no further time, but at once set out.

Having decided upon our stream, we take an early train from Scarborough to Hayburn Wyke, eight miles distant. We have provided ourselves with a strong rod (about eleven feet is a convenient length, though some anglers prefer one considerably shorter) and a plentiful supply of worms. Wasp grub and other baits may be used with success, but there is really no better bait than the small worm—whether brandling or lob-worm matters not. The fastidious angler, who scorns all fishing but that with fly, may hold up his hands in horror at the mention of worms; but fly-fishing is an absolute impossibility on one of these moorland streams, as we shall presently see. In fact, experience will soon teach the lesson that the more primitive one's tackle, the greater will be his chance of success. Obstacles—particularly those caused by shrubs and small trees growing on the banks, whose branches often spread right over the stream—are numerous, and one of the first cares of the angler must be to take all necessary steps for reducing the inconvenience caused by these obstacles to the lowest possible minimum. One of the best ways of doing this is by discarding the reel, and fixing the line to the top ring of the rod. This will leave only one length of line to watch instead of two. Personal experience has shown that the line up the rod from the reel to the top causes almost as much inconvenience as the line which is out, as the branches are often so close to the rod that this part of the line becomes caught in them repeatedly. Therefore it is best to get rid of it in the way suggested, particularly as there will hardly ever be the slightest use for it; for if a fish is hooked of such a weight that it cannot safely be drawn out at once—which will be the exception and not the rule—it will be taken in a pool from which it will not

attempt to escape, and it is quite easy to play it by holding the rod over the pool and following the trout's movements.

ON THE BEACH, HAYBURN WYKE

Two feet or so of line will be found sufficient, to which should be added about three feet of gut cast. If the water be very clear—as it generally is—the finer the cast the better, though constant

friction with the stones forming the bed of the stream (to say nothing of the brambles) will soon wear out a very fine cast, so that the angler should not forget, in the excitement of the sport, to keep a watchful eye on the condition of his cast, for nothing is much more annoying than to lose a good fish through the weakness of one's tackle. A single hook (Warner's No. 4 will be found a very suitable size, though some anglers prefer a larger) is perhaps better for these streams than either the Stewart or Pennell tackle, and it has a great advantage when one falls short of worms, because it is possible to make one worm last for half a dozen trout, by threading the hook so that when the trout is hooked and endeavours to blow the hook out of its mouth, it will blow the worm up the cast, when it is only necessary to draw it down on to the hook again, and be ready for the next comer; for these moorland trout are no disdainers of a ragged worm when they are hungry, and when they are not, well, nothing will tempt them, for they are not gluttons.

Having arrived at Hayburn Wyke we at once make our way down to the beach. Our way thither from the station is through a beautiful wood—a perfect fairy glen—in which footpaths, moss-grown and over-run by great bare roots of trees, intersect each other in all directions. He would indeed be a lucky man who should at his first attempt succeed in finding his way without one false turn from one end of this romantic wood to the other. A point perhaps worth remembering is that every step downwards takes you nearer the beach, and every step upwards will bring you nearer the station.

As we pass through the wood we are charmed with the singing of the countless birds and the scent of the honeysuckle, for it is one of June's best days, and the sun shines through the trees in little gleams of light, which here point out the wonderful colouring of a spider's web deftly spun on the young branches of a hazel shrub, and there lighting up now a beautiful white wild rose and then a glorious rich red one, make them shine like jewels in their setting of shady green. Every now and then we catch glimpses of the stream at the bottom of the wood as it splashes amongst the rocks or falls in a graceful cascade into a rocky basin where lurks many a bonny trout. Thoughts of the sport awaiting us make us quicken our footsteps, and we soon find ourselves the sole occupants of the rocky beach, the only other signs of life being in the great ships passing far out to sea and a solitary white gull which soars slowly over our heads on its search for food. The noise of the waves dashing on the

beach mingles with the splashing waters of the stream, which bound into a deep pool from a rocky ledge some fifteen feet higher, and rush to join the sea. To the north and south stretch magnificent, high, wooded cliffs, whilst close to us, bordering on the high-water mark, is the fringe of the beautiful wood through which we have just come. A more enchantingly peaceful scene it would be difficult to imagine.

In the pool on the beach we make our first effort, sheltering ourselves behind a friendly rock, and throwing the worm so that it enters the current caused by the falling water. We watch it

A DEEP POOL

as it drifts gently round and finally comes out on the shallows. Though as a general rule a trout will take the bait at the first sight of it we try again; for there may be a wary trout, older and wiser than most of his fellows, hidden somewhere under the shelter of the rocks, who regards with suspicion this sudden appearance of food, seeing that there has been no rain for three days. When, however, we drop the worm in again, and it has disappeared behind a rock in the pool, some hungry fish evidently thinks that a 'fresh' is coming down, for the line suddenly becomes taut, and, striking quickly, we fear for a moment that our hook has become caught in a buried branch at the

bottom of the pool, so great is the strain. But only for a moment. With a dash the line is carried across the pool and as quickly back again, and we catch sight of a trout, the like of which we never hoped to take to-day. After a few minutes' careful playing, during which he repeatedly tries to gain some buried brushwood, which would make our chance of landing him very remote, we are able to draw him out on the shallows, where we find that he is a fine specimen—beautifully marked and in grand condition —weight nearly half a pound.

I may here say that after hooking a trout which I intend to keep, I invariably kill it before taking it off the hook by pressing behind its head with the right thumb, whilst with the left I force its head upwards and thus dislocate its neck. Apart from the possible saving of pain to the trout, it appears to be a wise precaution, as a lively trout will often slip from the hand and reach the water again after being taken off the hook, or it may even escape from the creel, if the angler should slip, as it is quite likely he may do when walking about on damp, moss-covered stones.

We congratulate ourselves heartily on the capital start we have made, but it would be little use hoping to take another trout out of this pool, for they are very shy and wary fish, and, assuming that there might be others left in the pool, they, having been disturbed by the commotion and seen one of their fellows caught, would take good care not to share his fate. The secret of success undoubtedly lies in keeping all knowledge of one's presence from the trout, so that the angler must always endeavour to keep out of sight, and for this purpose must avail himself of every bit of cover possible. Acting on this principle we climb up the rocks and reach the stream above the fall. Passing a short stretch where the water is shallow, we stop behind a small tree and, casting up stream, the worm is carried under an overhanging bush. Immediately the bait is taken by a small trout. As it only weighs about an ounce we pull it out at once, take it carefully off the hook, and place it again in the water. For a moment it hardly seems to realise that its liberty has been restored to it, and it remains motionless. Suddenly, however, it recovers and makes a dash for the nearest stone, under which it wriggles with much upstirring of the muddy sediment on the bed of the stream.

A few steps further and we come to an ideal place for a good fish. A fine deep pool, surrounded with rock, and formed by a waterfall six feet high, it looks deliciously cool with its rocky

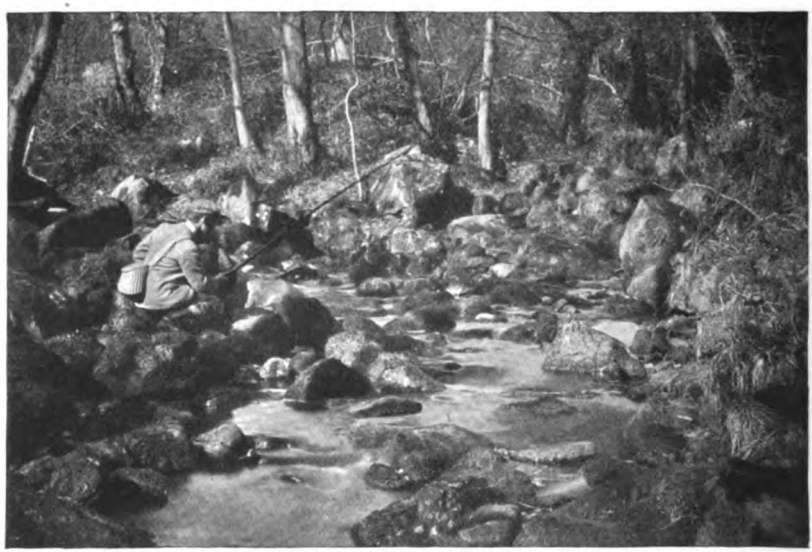
walls covered with moss and ferns. As there is little cover here for the angler, we stoop well down and gradually approach the pool. From a distance of about two yards we make our cast and allow the worm to sink gradually. When the cast has almost disappeared it is suddenly carried across the pool, and, striking, we find that we have hooked a fish of about the average weight. So that the water shall not be disturbed more than possible we whip it out at once, and cast again. After waiting a few moments we observe the line moving slowly, and it is evident that a suspicious fish is testing it. A little run, and we strike quickly, to find that Master Trout has been too cunning for us, as he has

A GOOD POOL

never had hold of the worm at all, so far as it was on the hook, but has contented himself with a piece of superfluous bait, which we trust will whet his appetite for more. He is evidently bent on getting as much as he can without running undue risks, so that it behoves us to be careful, for he is a fish of that kind which the angler delights to catch. Threading the hook very carefully with a specially selected worm, we try him again. A second time he tackles it cautiously, but a sudden 'strike' takes him unawares and he is firmly hooked. How he fights! Though only about five ounces in weight he is as game a fish as one need wish to play. With no shelter but the deep water of the pool he

twists and turns in vain endeavours to regain his liberty, growing weaker with every fresh effort, until, without danger of breaking the tackle, we are able to draw him out. There is no need to carry a landing net when fishing these little streams, for it would seldom be required, and the fewer encumbrances the better.

As it would be of little use spending further time on this pool, and as we have a long way to go, we push on. Passing cautiously round the edge of the water by a narrow anglers' path, we reach the top of the fall. Our sudden appearance startles a water-ousel, which is sitting on a rock basking in the sun, and soon his



WHERE THE MATING STREAMLETS MEET

black and white body is flitting up the distant stream. For some distance we have pretty much the same kind of rocky surroundings, and we proceed, with varying success; now casting round a bush to catch a fair-sized trout which we see on the feed in a shallow run; then trying near to a rock in the stream, from under which we have the satisfaction of seeing a trout dart suddenly, seize the bait, and dart back just as quickly, though with the hook firmly fastened in his gills. Every stone and overhanging bank is worth trying. There may always be a trout hiding there.

During a day such as I am attempting to describe, we come across many items of interest, which it will well repay us to stop and watch. For instance, here, close to our feet, is a little baby water-

rat, sitting on the bank of the stream and washing his face with his paws. Yonder is a sparrow-hawk trying to catch a linnet which has flown for safety into the thickness of that golden gorse bush. As we make ourselves known the hawk takes his departure with an expression in his eyes which shows plainly that he does not thank us for our interference.

For some time—ever since we started, in fact—we have been walking up the bed of the stream, stepping from one stone to another, or taking shelter behind bushes or rocks on the banks when occasion required. On either side the ground rises steeply,

GOOD COVER

covered with small trees and ferns, amongst which the hart's-tongue grows in rich profusion.

A heavy shower comes suddenly on, from which we take shelter under an overhanging ledge of rock. The rain ceases in about three minutes, as suddenly as it started, and once again the sun is shining brightly, lighting up into countless sparkling diamonds the crystal drops which hang from every leaf.

Soon the character of the scenery changes somewhat, and the trees, which have so far caused us little inconvenience, now stretch their branches right across the stream. It is impossible to get any better path than the bed of the stream, so, grasping

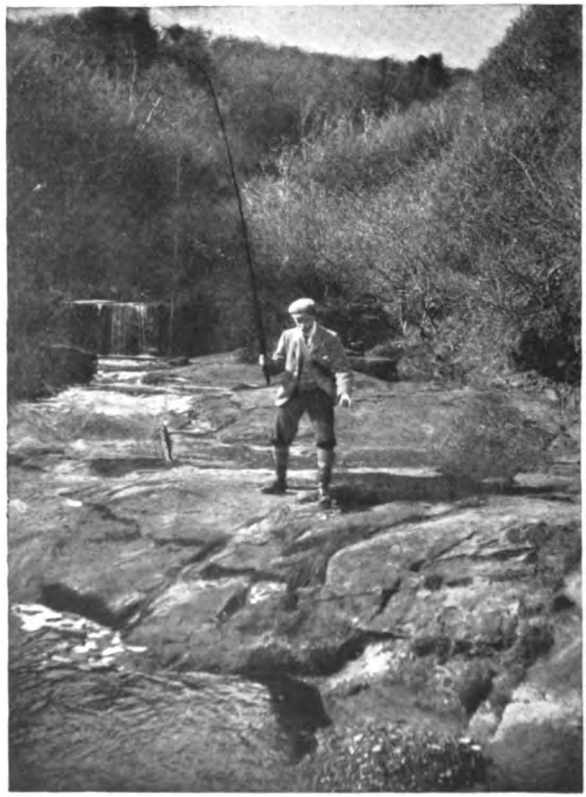
the cast near the hook and holding it close to the rod, we make the best of our way under the trees. Here our old friend the water-ousel fearlessly passes us in such close proximity that he almost touches us as he flies back to his basking-place.

Emerging on the other side we see trout rising in a shallow pool about twenty yards up the stream. If we can approach without their seeing us, and gain a convenient shelter, we may take two or three brace of them before they discover our presence. But the shelter is insufficient, and long before we gain the pool they have sighted us and disappeared to their hiding-places, from which nothing will tempt them for some time. So we pass on.

Awaiting us further up the stream is another grand pool, where we know from experience there will probably be a trout of the right kind. Trying all the likely places on the way, but wasting no time, we reach our pool—a pool which we are always eager to fish, but one in which we have never had any luck. Beautifully situated, at its head a pretty waterfall, below it a wide gravel space through which the stream splashes, and surrounded by fine old trees, whose branches hang so thickly overhead that they obscure the light and are yet sufficiently high not to interfere with the angler's movements, it forms an ideal place for a halt and a pipe. But first we must see whether we are likely to have any luck in this tempting pool to-day, so we at once cast the bait into the deep water. It is impossible to say what the depth of the water may be, but certainly it is the deepest pool on the stream, and it is big enough to hold the biggest trout that ever broke a line.

For some time there is not the slightest sign of a fish, but, after waiting about five minutes, we see that the line is slowly moving against the current of the water—a hopeful symptom. Striking, the line comes out easily enough, and an examination of the bait shows that a fish has been sucking it. Putting on a fresh worm (for we always treat these deep-pool denizens with respect) we try again. For a long time there is no sign, but just when we are getting tired of waiting a casual pull at the line gives us a very lucky chance, for there is no doubt that we have hooked a good trout, though possibly somewhat insecurely. He makes no fuss about the matter at all, and shows none of that fierce fighting spirit exhibited by his somewhat smaller friend further down the stream. Slowly he turns about, always firmly resisting a pull, but making no apparent effort to break away. After some few minutes of waiting we attempt to draw him out, and he comes quietly enough to the side, but just when we feel

sure of landing him he turns quietly over, and, the cast parting, he goes leisurely back to the depths from which we had temporarily drawn him. It is no use using strong language, that won't bring him back, the only chance is to try him again—an almost hopeless chance certainly, but we don't like leaving him without an effort to recover him—to say nothing of the cast and hook he has coolly taken away with him. A new cast and hook, a worm which



WHIPPING OUT A TWO-AND-A-HALF OUNCE TROUT

any trout might be proud to swallow, and a good quarter of an hour's patience, all fail to tempt him again, and once more we feel that there is no luck in this big pool. So we light our pipe, sit down on a rock, and think about it. As the fragrant smoke curls upwards we wonder how much intelligence a trout really has, and whether it is likely that this wary fellow nipped the cast with his teeth before taking hold of the worm.

As this big pool fills up the whole of the bed of the stream, and as its walls are perpendicular rock, we go back down stream for a short distance, and are then able to get up amongst the trees and so work round to the head of the pool. Still the water comes splashing and dashing over the rocks and gravel, forming every here and there a pretty little cascade, showing out white against the darker background,

> Where the silver brook is sparkling
> And the bonny trout lie darkling.

A slight rustle in the branches behind us, and we turn, to see on a straight old fir-tree a beautiful red squirrel. As he spots us he dodges round to the far side of the trunk, where, if we take the trouble to go and look, we shall see him stretched perpendicularly close to the trunk. When he sees us again he will probably become frightened, and think it time he was looking after his safety. With a quick run along one of the branches he leaps into the air, and with outstretched tail, which acts as a rudder and parachute, he descends gracefully to the ground, along which he runs for a few yards with tail erect before scaling another high tree and making his way along its branches, and so into the branches of an adjoining tree and out of sight.

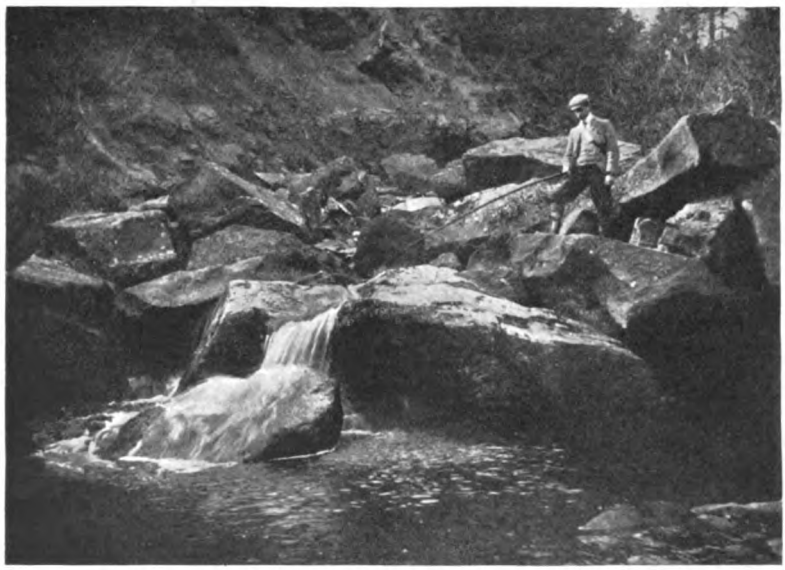
A lively little trout, which we hook in one of the runs, jumps suddenly out of the water and dives into a fissure between two stones. When we attempt to draw him out he extends his gills, and so makes it impossible for us to do so. Admiring this ingenious little fellow's pluck we remove one of the stones, and, having got hold of him, we take him off the hook and give him his liberty, hoping that we shall have the pleasure of meeting him again when he has grown.

The next change in the scenery comes with a little foot-bridge crossing the stream,

> In the peaceful wooded vale,
> Where the rose-buds are a-bursting
> And the hawthorn scents the dale.

Above the bridge, on the right side of the stream, is an open grassy space, from which it is easier to cast into the stream below than it will be for the next two miles. A long open pool here always holds a dozen or more decent trout, and so long as we remain unobserved we may hope to get good sport. It is worth while taking a little trouble, so we drop down flat on the ground, and, wriggling gradually to the side of the stream,

we cautiously drop the worm into the water. It has barely reached before it is seized by a fine trout, which appears, from the sound of splashing which we hear, to have leapt up to meet it. We do not venture to look over the bank, but haul our trout out at once. The same worm does for another, and yet another, and in six minutes we have taken as many trout, all from two to three ounces in weight. How many more we might have caught it is impossible to say, but the last one, having rushed under the near bank and caused the line to become entangled in an overhanging bush, has necessitated our showing ourselves and thus



A LIKELY SPOT

spoiling all further chance of sport in this particular pool. However, we have no cause for complaint, and already the creel is beginning to make its weight felt.

For some distance now the stream widens out and flows at little depth over the gravel. As it is much overgrown too, and very difficult to fish, it is not worth while to spend much time over it, so we content ourselves with trying the more likely looking places as we pass along.

Coming to a spot 'where the mating streamlets meet,' and taking the stream on the left, as being the longer, though the more difficult of the two to fish, we are soon struggling with

brambles and other innocent offenders against the tempers of anglers on hot days. For a moment we stop to look at a tree growing out of a rock. In the rock there is not the slightest sign of a crack, whilst the tree itself looks as healthy as any of its neighbours. For some distance up this stream—which is rightly christened Thorney Beck—we have to exercise the greatest caution, but, notwithstanding all our care, our tackle becomes entangled more than once in the thick growth of briar and bramble. It is truly a severe test for one's temper. However, all things must have an end, and by the time we reach the railway bridge we are breathing more freely. It must not be thought that amidst the many difficulties besetting the path, we have been compelled to abandon our fishing. On the contrary, we have succeeded in adding several more brace to our basket, though we have had the mortification of seeing many a good trout steal quietly into shelter before we have been able to make a cast for him.

In a dark pool under a tree root our bait is taken by an eel, about two feet in length. He proves a very awkward customer to deal with, and we have a big struggle before we succeed in landing him on our delicate tackle. Even when he is wriggling about in the sunshine on the grass, our troubles are by no means ended, for he succeeds in twisting himself and the tackle into a most hopeless tangle. Not until we have taken a handful of small gravel from the bed of the stream are we able to take any hold of his slimy body, but once a firm hold is secured, the rest is comparatively easy. It is seldom that one catches an eel in these quickly running streams—or, indeed, any fish of any kind whatever but the trout, who seem to have almost undisputed possession of them.

Once beyond the railway and the high road, and the moor is in sight. As we cross the road we come across the only specimen of humanity which it is our privilege to see on this fishing expedition. He is a rustic of the good old sort, and he is seated on the low stone wall of the bridge munching a huge sandwich. To all our queries about the neighbourhood his answer is invariably, 'Ah deean't knaw,' so we leave him in peace. Still the stream flows through wooded country, and fishing is still a difficult matter notwithstanding the precaution we have taken. As we work our way amongst the trees, a brilliant flash of colour over the water proclaims the dear little kingfisher—that most beautiful of British birds. We gain many more glimpses of this bright little fellow before finally leaving him behind us, and

we are glad to know that there is not now that danger of his becoming extinct in this part of the country which we were once led to fear.

I am not attempting to describe all the difficulties which come in the angler's way, for every fisherman knows the dangers of sunken branches, eddies round tree roots, and the like. However, in this stream the water is seldom too deep to prevent the recovery of tackle so caught, whilst it is always possible to get across to the other side. When fishing a stream of this character I always use an old rod, and I have often found it useful to take off the bottom

A POOL ON THE MOOR

joint and use it to liberate the hook when caught in the bottom of the stream or in overhanging branches.

We are much interested in a little trout which has taken possession of a shallow rocky basin, into which the water is pouring in one powerful jet from the rock above. By placing a foot at the outlet to this pool we seem to cut off from the trout all way of escape, for the pool is absolutely without shelter of any kind. After rushing hither and thither in apparent great concern, it takes up a position under the fall, where the water is disturbed. But it does not long remain satisfied with this poor substitute for cover, and with several sharp strokes of its tail it

wriggles up the jet of water, and we soon hear it splashing away up stream.

Before we have done thinking about this incident a frightened cry a few yards behind us in the wood tells us that a rabbit is in the pitiless grip of a weasel. Making our way quickly in the direction whence the cry has come, we get a glimpse of the fierce little poacher as he disappears swiftly amongst the bracken. Stooping down we raise a full-grown, trembling rabbit in our hands, and see that we are fortunately in time to rescue her; after putting her down to the ground again we have the satisfaction of seeing her make for a burrow in the wood side, and the white bob of her tail as she reaches her home.

Returning to the banks of the stream we are startled by a splash, and we see a tiny three-weeks-old rabbit, frightened possibly by the weasel's visit, struggling to get across the shallow stream. Jumping down we have no difficulty in catching it, and after one or two scratching struggles it lies very still on our hand, its little ears laid back and its big, brown, startled eyes staring at nothing. Even when we put it on the ground it still maintains this attitude, and it requires a persuasive poke or two before it musters sufficient courage to make a dash for liberty. We hear it scrambling amongst the undergrowth, and taking up a position from which we can see the burrow into which perchance its mother has just dived, we soon see it bob in too. Such incidents as these will occupy some time, no doubt, but as we are not bent on catching all the fish in the stream we can well afford it.

As we again take up our position on the stream we see tiny trout darting away in all directions. One of these little fry will possibly come out, and, with more pluck than discretion, set about our bait and do its best to swallow a worm twice its size; but we shall probably long ere this have had cause to regret the voracious habits of these minnow-like creatures.

Whilst we are fuming over another tangle of briar and cast, it will, perhaps, be as well to remember that we probably owe our fishing to this overgrowth, which, whilst providing the trout with an unlimited supply of food, no doubt preserves the stream from being 'fished to death.'

Ever and anon we turn sharply at the sound of imaginary human voices, but it is only the sound of the brook, whose waters, flowing swiftly over the stones, create a murmuring which at times sounds strangely human.

A tiny brown wren, carrying in his beak a small worm, comes

through a bush close to us, and, fearlessly looking at us, goes quietly hopping on his way, disappearing under the moss-covered bank of the stream, where no doubt is a nest full of smaller wrens still, hungrily awaiting his return.

We are now nearly out on the moor,

> Where the purple heather blooms,
> And golden gorse and boulders grey
> Keep guard o'er warriors' tombs.

The stream now flows gently over peaty soil, and we can easily stride across it at its widest part, but we still continue to

MOORLAND TROUT

have fair sport. No longer is there the slightest obstacle overhead or on the banks, so, standing well back we drop the worm between the two fringes of heather lining the banks, and wherever there is a 'dump' (as the moormen call a pool) there will be a trout. We soon catch several, and note at once that the superb colourings, the light brown and silver bodies dotted over with beautiful blue and red spots, which marked those we caught amongst the rocks, have now almost disappeared and given place to a dark brown, in which the spots are hardly discernible, a result of the difference in the formation of the bed of the stream. But still the trout are plump little fellows, and will eat quite as well as their more aristocratic-looking brethren.

Turning a corner suddenly we come upon a few moorland sheep with their lambs. Pretty little creatures they all are, the sheep themselves, with their black faces and curling horns, being no bigger than the well-fed lambs which we have seen further down the dale. The lambs run to their mothers' sides, and after staring at us for a moment they all leap a rude stone wall and trot away up one of the narrow paths which they have made for themselves over the wide moor.

Narrower and narrower grows the stream, until just when we think we are at the end of our fishing it opens out and forms a wide pool, partly covered with weed. Here we catch our last trout, which is second only in weight to the first we caught. He gives us some trouble, as he partially manages to avail himself of the protection afforded by the weed; but after a struggle we land him safely. Thus our best fishes are caught at the beginning and end of the journey, for we are practically now at the source, having followed the stream for about five miles. A few yards beyond this pool the water is only running in drops, and finally it runs out to nothing. Counting our fish we find that we have taken some thirty brace, whilst we have put back in the stream at least half this number of small trout. As we light our pipes and set off across the moor to the railway station at Staintondale —distant about two miles—we are struck by the thought that here, amongst all this moorland wildness, where we have seen only one human being, and even the sheep fled from us, we are within a mile or two of that great proof of civilisation, the railroad, and within ten miles of the beautiful 'Queen of Watering Places,' whose streets are now teeming with thousands of pleasure seekers, amongst whom we shall ourselves be walking in little more than an hour's time.

We watch the sun setting over the edge of the moor in a wondrous bed of crimson and gold, which soon turns to purple, and finally merges in the oncoming dusky twilight.

OUR SAILORS AT PLAY

BY LIEUTENANT STUART D. GORDON, R.N.

SHOOTING

LET it be at once stated that the above heading does not refer to the picnic performance that takes place once every year at Bisley —far from it. The term 'shooting' is here used to express the outcome of that rapid concentration of thought, combined with instant action, upon which the life of the sportsman so often depends.

Yet although this paper has for its more special subject shooting in the Royal Navy as allied to sport—in which, of course, the extreme contingency of life or death is not always present—it were perhaps not out of place to remark here that if the elements of quickness of hand and eye, acting in unison, were more developed in our Services, we should stand less risk of suffering again such indignity as that inflicted upon us by the Boers at Majuba and on other occasions, mainly the result of the superior marksmanship being on the side of the enemy. The Boer, shooting a springbok, does not lie upon his stomach and take aim for ten minutes or so, resenting as a personal insult the accidental cough of a bystander; the springbok is in a hurry, he cannot wait; the enemy will be in the same state in war-time, and long before the Bisley marksman has 'drawn his fine bead' he will be outflanked, surrounded, defeated.

Quickness of hand and eye are the two great essentials in a

sportsman—that is an acknowledged fact—and in no school are these qualities to be better acquired and cultivated than in the Royal Navy. Unhesitating decision is not one whit the less necessary to him who would excel in the use of the fowling-piece; and the man in Her Majesty's Service who even thinks about hesitating—upon any subject whatever—had better do so no longer, but send in his resignation at once. Trite and true is the old service saying, 'Smart is the word, and quick is the action.'

From this it will be rightly judged that in the Navy we are not utterly destitute of good shots, and that the reason that all are not does not arise from want of opportunity to practise will be gathered by the reader of this article; and if in the treatment of this or other subjects of the series it will be found necessary to quote experiences which are personal, the writer will hold himself as absolved from any charge of egotism by the undoubted preference there must needs exist for self-observed incidents—faithful relation being more consistent with the same—to mere hearsay statements.

In shooting, as in all other branches of sport, it must be confessed that the seaman—visiting as he does all parts of the world, uninhabitable as well as habited—has a decided pull over the landsman; and yet, now that the means of travel are so much improved, and the attendant expenses reduced, the distinction is not essentially so great as in days gone by. Nevertheless even now it remains the exception, not the rule, to see an Englishman leaving home, bound for 'foreign parts,' for the declared purpose of sport alone.

This is the more noteworthy when within a comparatively short distance of our shores there is, on many parts of the Mediterranean seaboard, sport the like of which is hardly to be surpassed anywhere. In fact, so prolific is game in some of these parts that a distinguished admiral, when some years ago in command of one of Her Majesty's ships up the Straits, was so enraptured with the sport afforded by a chance day's shooting on a certain small island in the Grecian Archipelago that he there and then arranged to become its tenant, and to this day holds the sole right of shooting upon that particular islet.

Of course this is an exceptional case among naval officers, and is only quoted as attesting to the abundance of game to be found in these regions. Such a procedure were necessarily out of the question but that the officer referred to happens to be possessed of considerable private means. The average Service man is fain

to content himself—at home—with the occasional day's sport on the estate of some more wealthy friend, and even then he finds the customary tip to the keeper, &c., only just falls inside the constricted limits of his purse.

But it is when away from home that he makes up in this respect for his lack of wealth. With his gun over his shoulder, and with a plentiful supply of cartridges in his bag or belt, he has but to land at each port his ship visits, and few indeed are the places that will not afford him sport of some sort or other; and this with the superlative advantage of there being no chance of a

HE HAS BUT TO LAND

too zealous Inland Revenue official demanding to see his licence, while his shooting ground is not limited to a few hundred acres or so; a restriction so provocative of exasperation when, having put up a covey of fine birds, one has to relinquish following them simply because they happen to have flown over the dividing hedge into the adjoining estate.

Then as regards the diversity in kind of game met with by the naval 'gunner.' To go no farther than the part of the world just alluded to—the Mediterranean—what will the stay-at-home Englishman think of the following list, comprising as it does the different birds and beasts that fell to the writer's gun in

a single day while on a shooting trip some little distance up a river flowing into Ayas Bay (situated on the coast opposite Scanderoon—Alexandretta)—red-legs, francolin, quail, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, wild-duck, wild-swan, hare, wild-boar, besides wild-cats and jackal abounding, and such delicate little morsels as doves and pigeons to be had in more than plenty? It makes one's mouth water only to read it. What, then, must the actual experience be like, and withal the sport itself? Never did the grouse, upon the most glorious of glorious 'Twelfths,' nor the September feast of St. Partridge, afford such real sport. Yet, provided he does not mind roughing it a bit—and has the funds—the home-bred gunner is within a matter of one week of the same place.

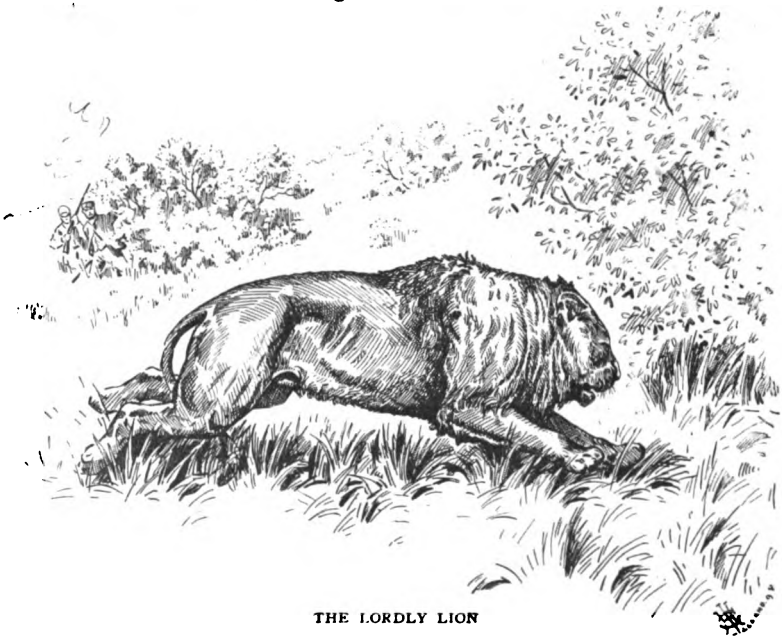
In many other parts of the world the sport obtainable is of even more diverse a nature than that quoted above; but as the mere enumeration of the various animals would amount to nothing more nor less than the naming of the whole family of creation, it is sufficient here to say that they all of them, at one time or another, may come within range of the naval man's gun.

But in shooting, as in other things, experience tends to disillusion. To take an example. The lion is surnamed the king of beasts, and generally looked upon as the personification of all that is brave—even being adopted as the symbol of our own Empire. But it must be acknowledged that in his first and only encounter with one of these monarchs of the forest and plain the writer must either have met with an over-educated and abnormally discreet exception, or the whole species is living upon a false reputation for fearless courage.

When at Basra, some thirteen years ago, my friend and brother officer R—— and myself went about three days' journey up the Shat-el-Arab on a shooting trip. Sport not being so good as upon our previous visit to the same locality, it was with no little degree of excitement that we one morning received from our shikar the intelligence that a lion was in the immediate neighbourhood. I may as well confess that, only being armed with a fowling-piece and a Service Martini each, it struck me at the time as being rather suggestive of foolhardiness for us, so meagrely equipped, to thus 'beard the lion in its den;' and as at the same time there flashed through my memory all the stories of dauntless bravery of the king of beasts, I was the more convinced of our temerity. However, as R—— was decidedly for having a shot at his royal highness, I was not the one to hang

back; so shouldering our rifles we set out, led by Ali (the shikar) and each attended by a 'bearer' carrying our guns loaded with ball.

Presently we were forcing our way through some high reeds, when, pushing aside a bunch or clump of rather exceptional thickness, I stood rooted to the spot with the gaping jaws of the lion himself not ten yards in front of me. Almost involuntarily the rifle flew to my shoulder and I had fired—with not much aim, it is true. However, thoughts travel even faster than bullets,



THE LORDLY LION

and I had already seen myself a mangled corpse—the lion's luncheon—when there was presented to my outward eye a momentary view of the after end of the beast, his tail tucked well up between his legs, as he ran like a hare, squealing for all the world like a pig.

We followed as fast as we could, taking pot-shots as we ran, and presently getting out into the open we both threw ourselves down upon the sward, and adopting the approved Bisley 'position'—though perhaps not the precision of aim, and certainly not the deliberation—commenced 'independent firing' (raising our sights), and it was not until the lordly lion had veritably disappeared in the distance that we sounded the 'Cease fire.'

From the traces of blood we afterwards discovered, it was

evident my first hurriedly fired bullet had found its billet; and had the animal acted up to the reputation his species so universally enjoy these lines would in all probability never have been penned.

Accounts of other big-game shooting—such, for instance, as elephants, tigers, and the like—have been so often given that it is hardly necessary to touch more fully upon this branch of the subject, though, perhaps, the hunting of the hippopotamus might be mentioned, as more frequently coming within the naval man's experience.

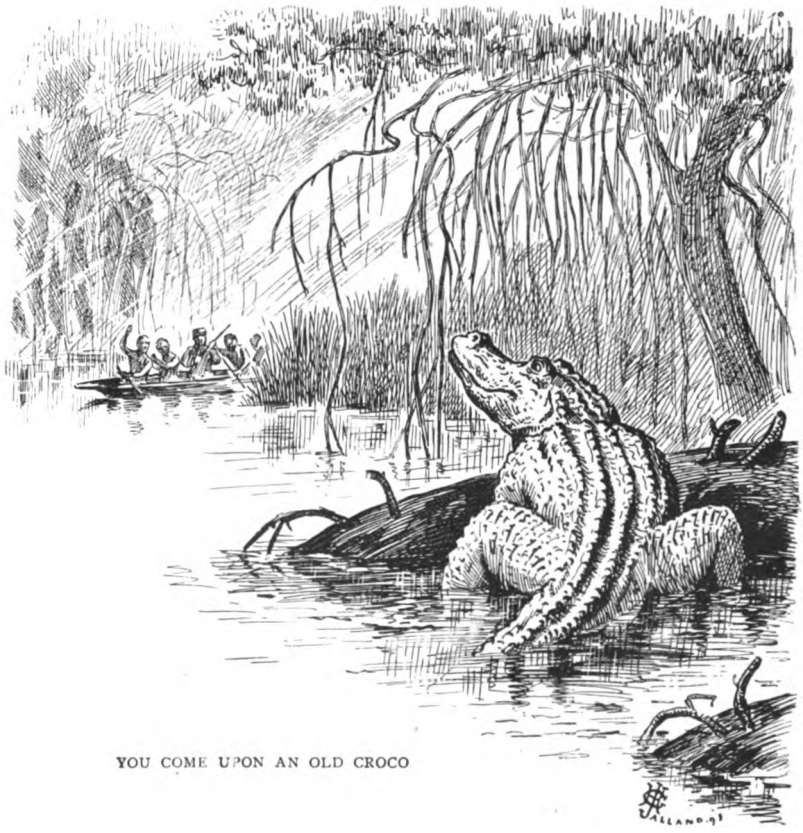
It is wrong to suppose that these beasts will attack one without provocation. Seldom, if ever, will they do so, except it be a cow hippo with a calf at heel, or her bull mate. But if themselves disturbed, they can, and do, make things extremely lively for the aggressor; and it is truly astonishing the weight of bullets they will carry, and yet show fight; indeed, it is no uncommon thing to see a hippo charge and capsize the boat after having been wounded over a dozen separate times.

The havoc caused by them in this latter respect was well illustrated when, some years ago, a party, including the Admiral Commander-in-Chief of the East Indian station, went on a hippo shoot a few miles up the Wami River on the mainland opposite Zanzibar. Upon this occasion, although the day's 'bag' amounted to some fifteen fine specimens, the casualties on the side of the sportsmen consisted of hired canoes almost innumerable being literally chawed up, while so great was the disaster that overtook the larger boats belonging to the men-of-war that afterwards one of these vessels was obliged to proceed across from Zanzibar, to the mouth of the river to gather up her lame ducks. These comprised galley and gig, both badly stove in—the former seriously; one dinghy sunk, and the other with several planks damaged—half her gunwale being completely torn off; while the steam-cutter not only had some of her timbers started, but one of the infuriated and wounded monsters had crunched the propeller out of all shape.

In himself the hippo is not to be seriously feared; for on land, should he charge, the onslaught is easily avoided, seeing that he, like the somewhat similar rhinoceros, requires the arc of a circle whose radius is something like a quarter of a mile before he is able to turn upon the sportsman, who has adroitly stepped on one side at the proper moment. But afloat it is a different matter; there is then introduced the further and serious element of danger—the crocodile.

These immense reptiles, which abound to a more or less extent

in every African river, are often confused with the alligator; and although the resemblance between the two branches of the same family is at first sight striking, the former, or African crocodile, besides other material differences, exceeds in size and greatly excels in voracity its American and West Indian cousins. And so much are they feared by the natives that when up the rivers some difficulty is experienced in getting one's boat loaded, that is,



YOU COME UPON AN OLD CROCO

if you have to depend upon native labour. The riverside population, indeed, are very careful not to thrust so much as a toe into the water where these creatures are known to congregate; and it is no uncommon thing to come across instances where men have had a hand or foot bitten off while dangling their limbs in the water for the sake of coolness. The shooting of the crocodile cannot be called an exhilarating form of sport, although when taking a casual shot at one of these beasts there is certainly

one moment of pleasurable excitement. This excitement arises when you happen to be in a small canoe, and suddenly see an ugly slimy head appear above the water, almost capsizing your frail craft. Then if you fire at him, aim for the underneath part of the throat, or, better still, down his mouth. To attempt to penetrate his scale-plated body is as likely to do damage as the pelting of an ironclad with lollypops.

Another kind of chance shot may be had when, as suddenly rounding a bend in the river, you come upon an old croco basking upon the bank. It will be but a moment in which you will have opportunity to put in a shot before he slides with a splash back

AND DOWN DROPS A CHINAMAN

into the muddy water—forwards, backwards, or sideways is all one to him—and disappears from your view. If you set out with the avowed purpose of shooting crocodiles—not trusting to chance ones—you must make up your mind to go after nothing else, and also be prepared to have to lie motionless upon the bank for perhaps an hour or more at a time, not uttering a sound, waiting till a monster happens to come up for breath within range of you —so shy of the presence of man are these reptiles.

With regard to the smaller kinds of game, it is a difficult matter to decide in which part of the world the naval man obtains the best sport. Australasia, besides her variety of game proper, presents almost countless specimens of birds, whose beautiful though gaudy plumage is equalled nowhere else on the globe, thus constituting these parts the paradise of the collector and taxi-

dermist. Yet in both these respects—game and specimens—the world's largest island is run close by any of the smaller isles of Java, Sumatra, or Borneo; while Ceylon also, with perhaps in a lesser degree India, have great claims to be considered. But, again, even India, with her millions of acres of paddy-fields teeming with snipe, lagoons and rivers swarming with water-fowl, not to mention the innumerable other birds that may fall to the sportsman's gun, is, in turn, almost surpassed in some cases by the vast Chinese Empire.

Snipe shooting, for example, is nowhere perhaps to be found in such lavish supply as in the land of the pigtail and chop-stick. For mile after mile one may wade through the young rice, the sharp 'tweet-tweet' of the snipe continually cheering and charming one on. And although there is none to say the sportsman nay, it is just as well to be prepared to pay indirect (and unauthorised) taxation to the owners, real or spurious, who will spring up from every side of the 'estates' one passes through.

On occasion, too, it is quite possible to unintentionally lay oneself open to demands for more than the damage done to young crops; for to fire at a bird and hit a man is an experience by no means uncommon, always probable, and in the circumstances scarcely avoidable. You are passing a field where the grass is rather higher than usual when, 'tweet-tweet-tweet, tweet-tweet,' a whole whisp of snipe rises from under your feet. Bang goes the right barrel and down drops a bird, maybe a couple; bang goes your left, and down drops a Chinaman, who, simultaneous with your firing, had jumped to his feet to see some one coming from whom he might demand *backsheesh*. A handful of 'cash'—amounting, perhaps, to twopence or less—is generally found to prove a sufficiently efficacious dressing for his wounds.

LADY MABEL'S SALMON

BY CAPTAIN THE HON. R. C. DRUMMOND

HALF A DOZEN men were seated in the smoking-room of Cairnton Manor, a large country house situated not a hundred miles from Market Harborough. The conversation naturally turned on the capital run they had enjoyed that day.

'You showed us all the way this afternoon, Anstruther,' said Lord Eorsa, the host. 'It is a pleasure to mount a man who really can ride to hounds, when I think of the duffers I have to find horses for sometimes.' His lordship chucked the end of his cigar viciously into the grate. Words failed him to express his sentiments on this point.

'I have to thank you for a real good day,' replied Anstruther, a middle-aged, rather plain man of quiet appearance. 'The chestnut carried me famously; it was more through his merit than mine that I saw so much of the run.'

'What became of you, Harley?' asked Lord Eorsa. 'I did not see you among the select few at the finish.' Sir Percival Harley was a good-looking, fair man on the right side of thirty. That he was still unmarried was not due to lack of encouragement, for Sir Percival was one of the richest men in

England, and much ingenuity had been expended in vain efforts to capture him. As will shortly appear, he was now contemplating matrimony of his own accord as easily as any detrimental with an income of 300*l.* a year.

'Old Rapidan put me down at the last fence but one,' he answered rather sulkily. All his wealth could not make a horseman of the baronet; men are born with hands, and an unsteady nerve is a prolific source of tumbles. 'Second fall he has given me this week. I shall have to get rid of him.'

'You are too hard on them; the best of hunters wants saving, at times. I hope you will pay us a visit in Scotland this spring,' continued Eorsa, turning to Anstruther. 'I don't know if you are as useful with a salmon rod as you are in the hunting-field, but I flatter myself we can show you fair sport. My daughter Mabel throws a better line than many men who fancy themselves. She will instruct you in the art, if salmon-fishing is not among your accomplishments.'

'I should like it immensely,' said Anstruther. Whether he referred to the proposed lessons from Lady Mabel or the prospective delights of catching salmon remained uncertain. On the following morning he returned to town, having pledged himself to visit Gribun Castle in May. John Anstruther possessed something more than a competence, having an income of about 2,000*l.* a year. He was a well-known man in his line of explorer and shooter of big game, and, strange to say, had never published a book describing his experiences, possibly because he had not sufficient imagination for the purpose. Those who had accompanied him on shooting expeditions had many a tale to tell of Anstruther's cool daring, whether with a charging elephant or wounded grizzly, or in the face of excited crowds of angry natives. But John Anstruther himself never enlarged on these matters. When interrogated about trophies of the chase from all quarters of the globe, which adorned his chambers in Park Lane, he would elude his questioner with the briefest possible replies.

On the same day that he had quitted Cairnton Manor, Lady Mabel Kintyre received an invitation—in reality a command—to join her mother at tea in the boudoir. Lady Mabel was an only child. In the absence of a son and heir her father had made her his companion, and being himself a good all-round sportsman, it was not singular that his daughter had acquired some of his tastes. And so it happened that she rode to hounds well and fearlessly, and with her light 20-bore gun could bring down her grouse in capital style. But salmon-fishing was her special delight, and, as

her father had said, her skill with the rod was really remarkable for a girl. Mabel was universally acknowledged to be pretty, with dark hair and eyes, a charming natural figure, and—a will of her own; 'shocking obstinacy' her mother called it. Her father spoilt her sadly, so it was perhaps fortunate that the Countess of Eorsa adopted a different line.

Obedient to the summons she presently repaired to the boudoir, a room which, since her childhood, had been associated with unpleasant interviews.

'Well, Mabel,' began Lady Eorsa, when her daughter was supplied with a cup of tea, 'and how did you get on with Sir Percival? I was certain, from the expression of his eye, that he intended to speak before leaving.' The baronet had departed after luncheon. 'You were together in the conservatory for half an hour; did he propose?'

'Yes,' indifferently.

'And you accepted him, my darling child!'

'Not exactly,' observed Lady Mabel.

'Do you mean to tell me, you wicked girl, that you have refused Sir Percival Harley? He can make better settlements even than the Duke of Earnscliffe, whom you might have married last season if you had given him the slightest encouragement. Upon my word, Mabel, you are a perfect fool!'

'Don't be in such a hurry to abuse me, mamma,' said Mabel, coolly. 'I did not refuse Sir Percival. I told him I had not made up my mind. Besides——'

'I am glad you have a few grains of common sense remaining, though why you can't make up your mind, as you call it'—her ladyship sniffed contemptuously—'is more than I can understand. Sir Percival is handsome, rich, young. What else do you expect?'

'There is another,' began Mabel.

'Another what?' inquired Lady Eorsa in awful tones.

'Last night John Anstruther asked me to marry him,' continued Mabel, quietly.

'John Anstruther!' quoth her ladyship. 'Why not call him Jack at once? The man is double your age, and little better than a pauper. Pray did you accept this eligible offer?'

'No; I told him also that I could not give him an answer at present.'

At this juncture the door opened, and, inserting his grey head rather cautiously, Lord Eorsa observed that there was just time to go round the short golf holes before luncheon. Mabel

promptly effected her escape, having held her own fairly well in this preliminary engagement. From long experience Lady Eorsa knew that any attempt to enlist her husband on her side would be useless. He always took his daughter's part. Besides, she thought it quite possible he would favour the suit of John Anstruther; such was his unparalleled ignorance of the duties of an earl with a marriageable daughter. Compressing her thin lips, Lady Eorsa decided to bide her time and to crush this hateful John Anstruther when occasion offered—by fair means if possible.

It was the first week in May, and the family were assembled at breakfast at Gribun Castle. As yet they were alone, but several visits were impending; Sir Percival Harley, among others, was expected that afternoon.

'You seem to have an amusing correspondent,' observed Lord Eorsa, noting the smiles with which his wife perused a letter, so closely written and crossed that it was a marvel she could decipher it.

'Only some of dear Lady Betty Martin's nonsense,' she replied, glancing at her daughter. 'But there is a portion of her letter you ought to hear, Mabel. I will read it.'

'"I wonder if you know that odd Mr. Anstruther? It seems that he is not at all a nice man. He has just returned from one of his wild expeditions, and now he is always about with that horrid Mrs. Grant. I need not tell you, my dearest Lucy, that a man who keeps such company is not fit for the society of respectable people."'

There was a triumphant ring in her ladyship's voice as she read the last sentence. Mrs. Grant was a pretty woman, separated from her husband, possibly more sinned against than sinning; but as she possessed neither wealth nor a title, the world, naturally, was censorious. She had made her first appearance in society, meteor-like and brilliant, in the previous season, but now the path of her orbit was rapidly leading her away from the central constellations. Her husband was generally regarded as a myth. Decidedly Mrs. Grant was an undesirable acquaintance for John Anstruther in his present circumstances.

'I don't believe a word of it!' exclaimed Eorsa. 'Anstruther is an honourable man. If it had been Percival Harley now——'

Lady Mabel said nothing, but her hand trembled slightly as she poured out a cup of tea for her father.

'You are, of course, at liberty to doubt Lady Betty's word. But I must request that Mr. Anstruther's visit be postponed

until this matter is cleared up. I have some regard for my daughter's character if you have none. As for Sir Percival Harley, he can afford to despise your sneers.' The entry of a servant put an end to the discussion, and having discharged this bomb into the enemy's camp, Lady Eorsa presently took her departure.

'Do you believe it, papa?' Mabel inquired in a low voice.

'No, I do not,' replied her father stoutly. 'Lady Betty is one of the worst scandal-mongers in town, though she is your mother's first cousin, and John Anstruther is about the last man from whom I should expect that sort of conduct. Still, it is a queer world, and I suppose I ought to inquire into the matter.'

It was shortly established beyond all doubt that Anstruther had been seen frequently in the company of Mrs. Grant. But not inclining invariably to place the worst possible construction on people's conduct, like Lady Betty Martin, Lord Eorsa's correspondent asserted that in his opinion there was 'nothing in it'—certainly no valid ground for excluding John Anstruther from the party at Gribun Castle. So, notwithstanding her ladyship's vehement opposition, it was decided that Anstruther's invitation should hold good.

In due course he arrived, and with him the Hon. Charlie Verner, a subaltern in the Coldstream Guards. Verner was a connexion of the Eorsas, and he and Lady Mabel were great friends. He had given her many a lesson in the art of fly-fishing, and not being the least afraid of Lady Eorsa, proved a useful ally when the Countess declared—as she often did—that field sports were unladylike.

To say that Anstruther was surprised at the frigid reception he experienced at Gribun Castle expresses his state of mind very inadequately. From his hostess he expected little else, knowing he was not one of her favourites. But Mabel avoided all but the most formal intercourse, seeming entirely to forget the important question he had asked her at Cairnton. In the meantime Sir Percival Harley made the most of his opportunities. Mabel appeared to encourage his attentions, and having, from past experience, a very good idea of his own value, the baronet concluded that success was merely a matter of time. Lady Eorsa treated her daughter with the utmost kindness, and, rejoicing in the success of her schemes, was almost civil to the guest for whose benefit they had been planned. That gentleman observed these proceedings with wrath in his soul; clearly the girl had thrown him over in favour of the wealthy baronet.

Charlie Verner and Mabel were returning from the river after a blank day, for it was low, and not a fish was moving. Mabel was in rather an absent mood, but at last Charlie started a subject which seemed to interest her.

'I don't know if Anstruther can fish,' he observed, 'but a cooler hand behind a rifle I never met. Did I ever tell you how he saved my life in Alaska?' Mabel expressing her ignorance of this incident, Charlie proceeded to give a graphic account thereof. It appeared that a wounded grizzly had been on the point of causing a vacancy in a certain battalion of the Coldstream Guards, when a bullet from Anstruther's rifle cut short its career. To this exciting narration Mabel listened with absorbed attention.

'Have you known him long?' she asked.

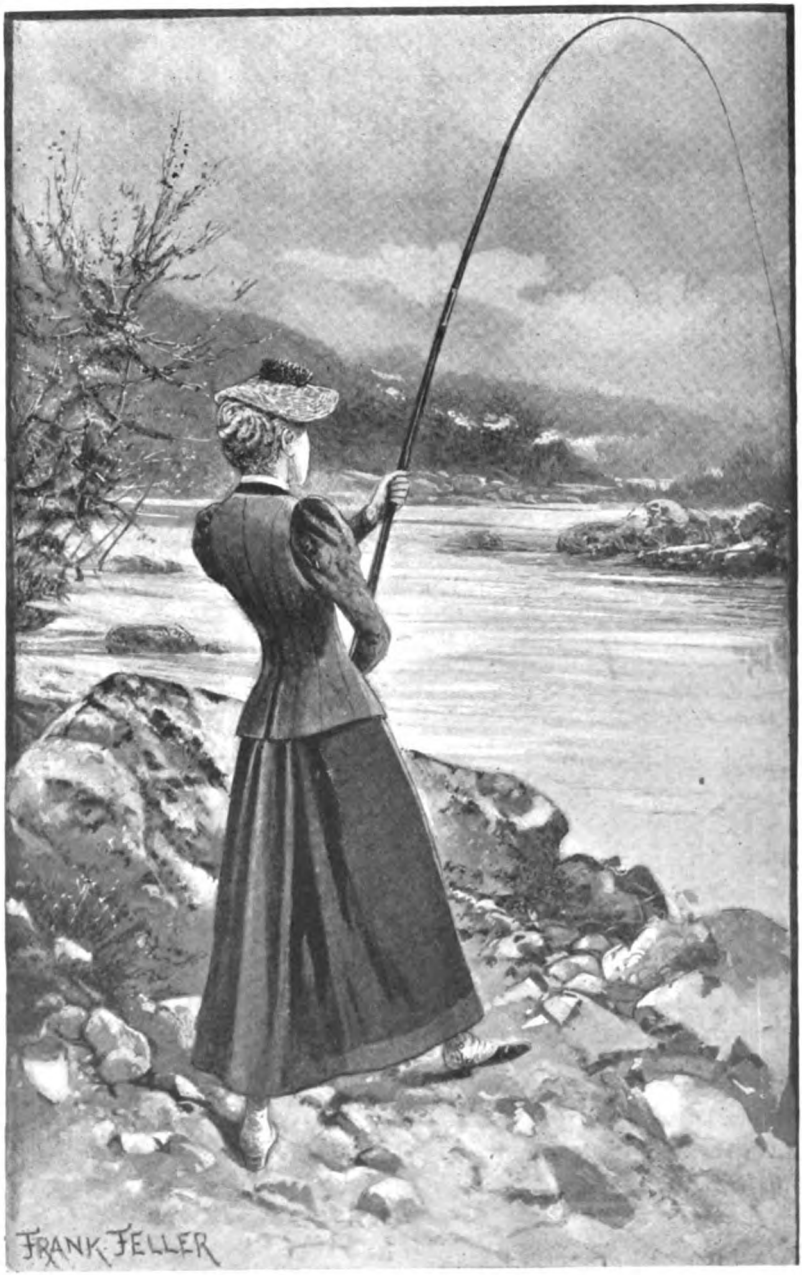
'Since I joined the service,' replied her cousin; 'and I admire him more than any man of my acquaintance. It is not only that he does not know the meaning of the word fear, and has risked his life scores of times; he is so unselfish. Many a kind action has John Anstruther performed of which the world has never heard.'

'He is said to be very intimate with Mrs. Grant,' Mabel observed; 'and I believe she is not at all a nice person. Papa was not sure if we ought to have him here.'

'What!' exclaimed Verner, stopping short, 'do you not know how he came to make her acquaintance? But of course you don't, though I should have supposed her ladyship was better informed. I was with Anstruther in Victoria, British Columbia, when we came across an Englishman—unmistakably a gentleman—who had got into trouble, as many fellows do in the colonies. He was a good-looking man, and not a bad sort, though as weak as water. Anstruther befriended him, got him away from the town, and finding that he was separated from his wife, promised to do his utmost to arrange matters. To cut a long story short, our acquaintance turned out to be Mrs. Grant's husband. He arrived in town last week—you can guess who paid his expenses, for the man had nothing—and he and his wife are reconciled. It was the talk of society for three days, as very few people believed in the existence of pretty Mrs. Grant's husband. This is the true story of the acquaintance between that lady and Anstruther—the man whom your father considers a doubtful character,' concluded Charlie Verner with some warmth. They had nearly reached the Castle, and Mabel making no reply, the conversation dropped.

That evening the wind backed to the south, heavy clouds

obscured the sky, and the rain was descending in torrents when the party at Gribun Castle broke up for the night. The weather cleared early on the following morning. At breakfast it was reported that the river had risen a couple of feet, and, though slightly coloured, was nevertheless in grand order for the fly. John Anstruther was despatched in charge of the fisherman to try the upper water, and Charlie Verner decided to take a turn at a hill loch, reputed to contain prodigious trout. After lunch Mabel started forth alone to cast a famous pool at no great distance from the Castle. It was a fine afternoon. The brilliance of the sun was obscured from time to time by fleecy clouds which drifted rapidly across the sky before a strong westerly breeze. As Mabel tripped along the path by the river, the rain-drops, still clinging to grass and bushes, sparkled like diamonds where the sun-rays glanced athwart the interlacing branches of stately forest trees. Now and again a startled bunny scuttled away before her, or a stealthy 'flop' by the bank told of the hurried exit of a water-rat. The surface of the broad river, where it flowed smoothly over shallows, was dimpled with rising trout, and as she neared the Rock Pool—for so it was called—Mabel shook off certain gloomy reflections which had occupied her mind, and resolved to catch a salmon if the feat might be accomplished. The pool took its name from a large water-worn rock which jutted out on the far side; below it the black and sullen current swirled treacherously over unknown depths. So broad was the Gribun river at this spot that only a few casts were possible without the aid of a boat. Heavy salmon were killed here every season. Forty-pounders were not uncommon, and as a rule the fish never attempted to leave the pool, and so were easily landed. Below the rock an old stone croy—probably the remains of an ancient cruisve—ran out from the opposite bank, and it was just above this croy, where the stream quickened towards the rapids below, that Mabel hoped to kill her fish. Her light 16-foot rod of built cane was soon ready, and as she inspected the Silver Doctor at the end of her cast, Mabel bethought her that she had no gaff; also that she had never yet attempted to land a salmon on her own account. That necessary operation had always been performed for her. The fact was she had come out rather to escape the attentions of the baronet and to be alone with her own thoughts than with the serious intention of fishing. But the river looked tempting. It seemed a pity not to test her fortune now she was at the pool. Gradually she let out the line till she was casting fair over the lie of the salmon. It was pretty to see how



MABEL FELT THE HOOK STRIKE HOME

easily and gracefully she sent the long line flying across the water; to note how lightly the fly fell as the cast straightened out.

A large swirl came in mid current, and raising the point of the rod with a deft turn of the wrist Mabel felt the hook strike home. Never before had she hooked a salmon when alone, and her heart beat quickly as she kept a taut line. The fish forged up stream; then increasing speed as it felt the steel, it tore away across the pool to the old rock; then sprang aloft, falling back in the river with a loud splash, and revealing the proportions of a splendid, clean-run salmon. The girl dropped the point of her rod at the critical moment, but her pulses went faster than ever as she saw what a grand fish she had on. For a time it bored in the deeps by the rock, shaking its head savagely and drawing out the line in little jerks—a process trying alike to the nerves of the angler and the grip of the fly—then moved slowly up under the opposite bank. At least sixty yards of line were out, but Mabel could only keep opposite to her fish and await developments. Suddenly the salmon sheered towards her, swung round, and turning tail down stream, darted past her at a tremendous pace. For a few seconds the line was drowned, but Mabel was equal to the occasion, and reeled up rapidly. Past the old croy the fish held on at the same fast pace, and away into the rapids below, the reel screaming as the line went off. Mabel ran swiftly some fifty yards along the gravel which lined the bank, then halted. Below her a backwater, deep and dangerous, interposed an impassable barrier to further progress. In front the current sped arrow-like to the boiling, curling waves of the rapid. Not another step could she follow. The reel still sang merrily as the fish tore on its way. In vain she tried to check it. She could have cried with vexation at losing such a splendid salmon.

A hurried step sounded on the gravel at her side.

'Let me take the rod,' said Anstruther. 'There is no time to lose, I fancy.' He had seen the battle from afar, and, running at the top of his speed, had arrived in the nick of time. Mabel was only too glad to relinquish the rod, and, turning the reel upwards, Anstruther glanced at the line. Only a few yards remained. Cautiously he gave the fish the butt, and for a second it showed at the surface, far down the stream.

'A heavy fish!' he exclaimed.

'I am afraid we shall never land him,' said Mabel. 'How I wish we had the boat!'

'It's an awkward place,' replied her companion. 'However, we shall see.'

For a few moments it seemed possible that the fish would yield to the strain. The light rod bent double as Anstruther held on all he dared, and the salmon swerved towards the edge of the current. Then came a splash from a broad tail, and the reel revolved sharply.

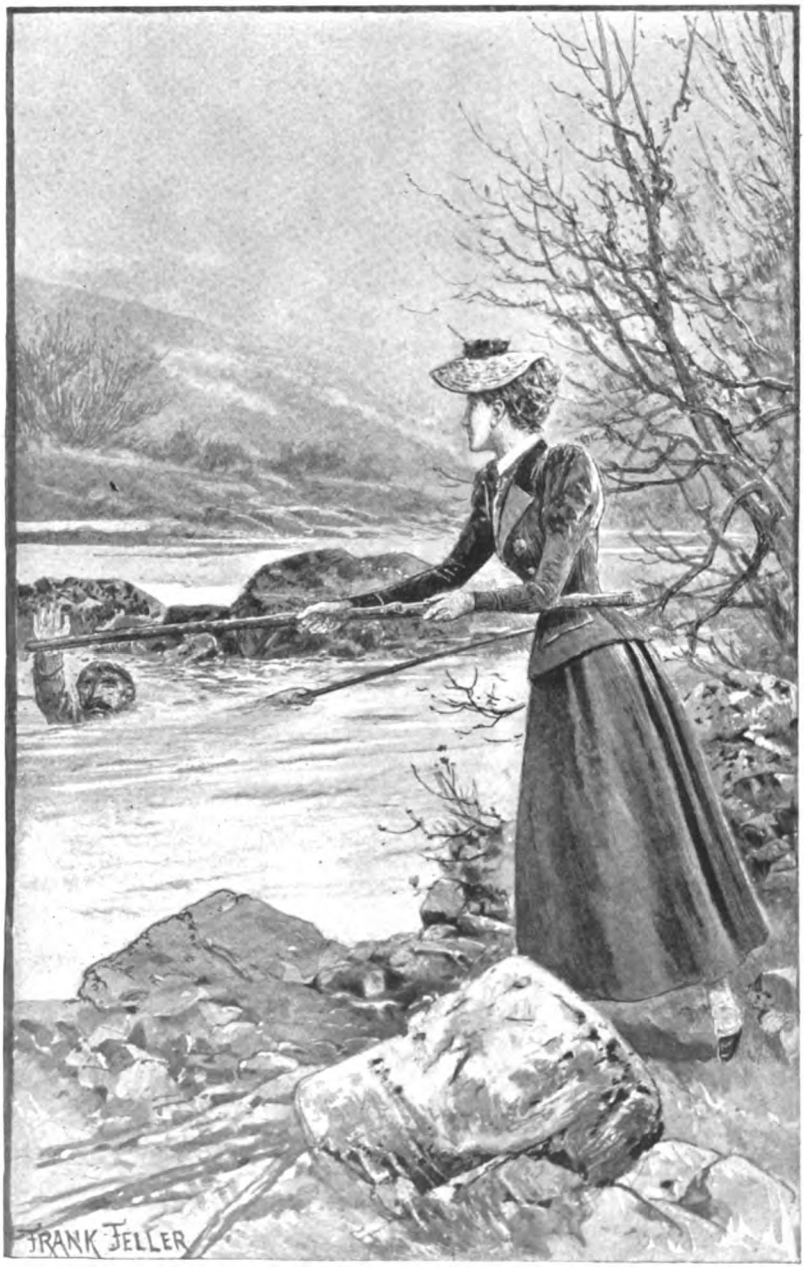
'I am afraid there is no help for it,' observed Anstruther, stepping into the water.

'Pray be careful,' exclaimed Mabel. 'I have always heard that this is a very dangerous place.'

'Must follow,' said Anstruther briefly. 'There is not the slightest danger.'

As he spoke he waded quickly down with the current, which at once covered his knees. On his left hand the foam-flecked depths of the backwater swirl sullenly; to his right the rushing current breaks into the waves of the rapid. A gravel spit runs out from the point where Mabel is standing, and the eye can trace it along the edge of the rapid till, nearly a hundred yards away, the current impinges on the curving bank below. Along this bank of gravel Anstruther hopes to follow the salmon, which now begins to show symptoms of exhaustion. If only he can coax it into the backwater, the rest will be easy. In the meantime it drifts on with the powerful stream, and the rodsman is obliged to follow. The water is deeper than it looks. Presently it laps about Anstruther's waist, and holding the slender rod in one hand, he staggers over the uneven bottom, striving to retain his footing. A shrill scream echoes from the bank as the adventurous angler plunges into a hole, falls headlong in the river, and disappears from view, though for only a second. In the next he is swimming vigorously amid the tumultuous waves of the rapid —the rod held always aloft in one hand—and he finds breath to shout encouragement to the girl on the bank. Mabel is not wanting in nerve, and in less time than it takes to write these lines she has run round the backwater and down the bank, ready to give what assistance she may. By this time Anstruther is clear of the rapid. The long line drifts loosely with the current, and it is impossible to tell if the salmon is still at the end of it.

Anstruther nears the bank, swimming steadily on his left side—almost on his back. A few yards of eddying backwater intervene between the main current and the bank. Entering this the swimmer is spun round in a miniature whirlpool, which pulls down his legs and almost draws him under the surface. Mabel realises the danger. She sees that he is tiring, though he never slackens his grip of the rod. The bank near her is strewn with driftwood. Seizing a stout pole, some ten feet long, she holds it



SEIZING A STOUT POLE, SHE HELD IT OUT WITH BOTH HANDS

out with both hands towards Anstruther as, still fighting bravely with the strong water, a swirl of the current brings him near. He grips it, and with white face and set teeth the girl holds on. Now his feet touch bottom, and he flounders ashore. Mechanically, still dazed with the buffeting of the swollen river, he reels in the line. But Anstruther, to use a common phrase, is 'hard as nails'—always in condition. In a wonderfully short space of time he has almost recovered from the effects of his cold bath. Presently he feels the fish.

'Your salmon is still on, Lady Mabel,' he observes, quietly. 'By the way, I have to thank you for saving my life. I should never have got away from those whirlpools without your assistance.'

'I thought you were lost,' she replies, almost in a whisper.

How John Anstruther duly tailed the fish on a shelving bank of gravel; how it was found to weigh 35 lbs., to be clean run, and bright as a new shilling; how he tried to make light of his exploit, which, however, lost nothing from Lady Mabel's telling at dinner that evening; the consternation of the fisherman when he heard what had happened while he was 'sorting' the boat—these matters may be left to the imagination of the reader. But we must claim her or his indulgence for one more interview with Lady Eorsa.

The time was eleven o'clock; the place the Countess's bedroom. Her ladyship was a little out of sorts, and breakfasted in bed. She was, however, in a particularly amiable mood, and addressed her daughter with unusual suavity.

'I have been much pleased,' she began, 'to see how sensibly you have behaved about Sir Percival Harley. I knew you would see the folly of thinking of Mr. Anstruther, especially after he had made himself so conspicuous with that Mrs. Grant. And now, my dearest girl, the time has arrived for more definite arrangements. Sir Percival spoke to me yesterday. Nothing could be nicer or more satisfactory than his ideas about settlements, and I told him how gladly your father and I would welcome him into the family. The wedding, of course, will take place here; but the question is, when?'

'With Sir Percival Harley? Never!' replied Mabel firmly.

'What!' exclaimed Lady Eorsa. Very terrible she looked, sitting up in bed. 'Are you in your senses?'

'Perfectly,' replied Mabel, undaunted. 'I am also engaged to John Anstruther—since yesterday evening—and what is more, papa approves of the engagement.'

NOTES

BY 'RAPIER'

It would seem strange if in the 'Badminton Magazine' I said nothing about the late Duke of Beaufort, with whom for so long a time I was so closely associated in the Badminton Library, of which this Magazine may be described as a species of offshoot. But the task is far from an easy one. Only those who enjoyed the privilege of the Duke's intimate friendship can realise what his loss means, and the hard thing is to know what should be said and what should be withheld as too private and personal for publication. My acquaintance with the Duke was made some twenty years ago at the Beef Steak Club. We were discussing sport one evening after dinner, and as I was leaving the room, the Duke, with characteristic kindness, stopped me and said, 'You are fond of a hunt; will you come down to Badminton and have a gallop with my hounds?' The prospect was, of course, delightful. I need scarcely say with what gratification I accepted; and so I came to pay the first of many visits to what I shall always regard as the most charming country house in the world. One naturally uses superlatives in speaking of the kindest of men, but it is surely not exaggeration to express a doubt if there was ever anyone who understood more thoroughly the whole theory and practice of fox-hunting. Often I have sat on my horse by the Duke's side while the field has streamed away from us. After a few moments on one or two occasions I have

ventured to say, 'Hadn't we better get on, Duke?' But his reply would be, 'No, wait a minute.' Then suddenly he would turn his horse, remark, 'I think we may as well go this way,' and gallop off in a direction in which I should never have expected to find hounds again; but surely enough, by some subtle intuition he had understood the run of the fox, and we found the field, after a minute or two, rapidly approaching us, so that we were able to join in. During the last few years of his life the Duke never jumped, but it was amazing at what a pace he made his horses gallop with his weight in the saddle.

The first evening we drove home together after hunting, an odd thing happened. As we passed the post office in the village of Badminton, someone apparently brought a light into the front room. The consequence was that a brilliant ray shot across the road, about five feet from the ground, just in front of the horses' noses. The two old hunters seemed to take this for the top bar of a gate. They rose at it with one accord and made a tremendous jump, but luckily nothing in the harness gave, and the Duke, who was driving, was always ready for all emergencies. He talked of it for days after as one of the most extraordinary things that had ever occurred to him in his driving experiences—which I suppose must certainly have been greater than those of any other living man. I doubt if we shall ever see again so perfect a model of courtesy and consideration. When crippled with gout so that every step must have been pain to him, I have seen him go round the billiard table at Badminton, just to give a match to someone who chanced to have an unlighted cigarette in his hand. Such trifles as these tell a tale of their own. I remember, during my first visit, making a sort of excuse for a clumsy performance in the saddle on the ground that I was not used to plain flaps. It must have been nearly a year afterwards, at the beginning of the next season, I was at Badminton again. We drove up to the Meet, and among the horses waiting for us I noticed a couple carrying saddles with padded flaps. The Duke nodded towards them. 'I recollect you said you preferred those saddles,' he said, 'so I got a couple for you.'

When I had the good fortune to make the Duke's acquaintance he was just returning to the Turf, and my memory recalls

delightful days at Newmarket, when, with his close friend, the late Lord Suffolk, for companion, we drove about and watched finishes at the various winning posts on the Heath. 1887 was his most prosperous year, with Rêve d'Or winning nine races, including the Oaks, and Carlton eight, winding up with the Manchester November Handicap. On the evening of the day when this race was run, the Duke was presiding at the now extinct Beaufort Club, then held in Dover Street, where an evening festivity was given, and he had asked me to be his guest. I had not seen him for some days, but had read in the evening papers that Carlton had won, and was extremely anxious to know whether I had been included in the commission; for at that time, whenever the Duke fancied anything very much, he was usually good enough to back it for me. He arrived rather late, but his first kindly remark was an expression of regret that he only got me twenties, for the horse had previously stood at a longer price. One certainly is inclined to be more than contented with twenty to one! The Duke was particularly pleased at this success, because so many experienced racing men had doubted the possibility of Carlton winning under the weight, and he told me of the incredulity of the late George Reynolds, his then commissioner. When instructed to put the money on, George Reynolds had remarked, 'But surely your Grace does not think this horse is a second Isonomy: I cannot believe in it and shall not have any for myself.' The Duke, however, had his own opinion, replied that before night it would probably be seen that the horse was another Isonomy; and the opinion turned out to be correct. Poor Ned Somerset, in whose name the horse ran, had constantly said before the race: 'Some brute that starts at a hundred to one, and that no one had ever heard of, is certain to come and do us a head!' It is very strange that one of the rankest of outsiders, Sorrento, who really did start at a hundred to one, came with a desperate run at the finish and was only beaten by the head which the owner had several times timorously anticipated would be the other way.

How Carlton came to lose the Cambridgeshire the year before has yet to be explained. The Duke made no secret of his own explanation, but that is not a matter which it is judicious to discuss here. For days before the race poor Fred Archer had endeavoured to persuade me to back St. Mirin, and three or four times I mentioned this to the Duke, who only replied: 'If

Carlton does not beat St. Mirin it is perfectly useless to try horses. I saw the gallop: I am sure it was right and St. Mirin can have no chance.' We waited to see Carlton saddled in the Bird-cage before driving to 'the top of the town,' and once more I met Archer, as I walked across the grass to the fly. Again he asked me if I was on St. Mirin, declaring he was certain to win; but the Duke was convinced that Carlton could not lose. It may be observed that the successes of various Manton-trained outsiders about this period—Button Park, for instance, at Doncaster—were not, as they were supposed to be, proofs of Alec Taylor's strategy and adroitness. Several of these victories were quite unexpected, and in my book, 'The Turf,' I have related at length the story of the mishap by which Winter Cherry came to carry off the Goodwood Stakes, for which she had been started only to make running for the then Lord Hartington's Sir Kenneth. Rêve d'Or, however, had disappointed her owner on two or three occasions before she carried off the Dewhurst Plate, and her victory in that race, for which she started the absolute outsider of the party at twenty to one, was not altogether a surprise. I said to the Duke after the race: 'I do not know whether to congratulate you or to condole with you for not having backed her, for I am afraid you did not think she would win?' to which he said: 'I was not astonished at all. She would have won several races if George Barrett had given her a chance, for she is a mare that wants to get on her legs before she is bustled, and he would never do what he was told. Wood obeyed his orders, and I was not at all astonished to see her win.'

Petronel's Two Thousand success was a surprise after the horses had passed the post. I have already told the story of how the Duke, who did not think that he had won, put up his glasses, turned away, and said: 'One stride further and mine would just have got up!' and it was a most welcome sight when, on looking at the board, he found that George Fordham had measured his effort with marvellous accuracy, and that the head was the right way. I have also elsewhere related the story of the disappointment occasioned by The Cob's failure in the Cesarewitch, how again and again his jockey was told by the Duke and by Alec Taylor what a lazy horse The Cob was, and that he must on no account drop his hands until he was well past the post; but how, making sure he had won, he stopped riding and let Stone Clink beat him. Lord Edward Somerset's fortunes would have

been retrieved had this come off, and I shall never forget his face and voice as we watched the finish together; for even when the race was over he believed that The Cob had just got home, and it was a bitter blow when this time the judge caused the wrong number to be hoisted. It was a blow to me too, for I had started what looked like being a charming winning account, by taking 50 to 1!

Another memorable Cambridgeshire which I saw with the Duke was in 1882, when Hackness won, or rather I should say, on the day when she did not win, and when, in consequence of one of the most violent storms ever known at Newmarket, the race had to be postponed. Carriages were absolutely blown upside down, their wheels revolving at incalculable speed, and Mr. Arthur Coventry, who rode down on his hack to the starting-post to say that the Stewards had decided to postpone the race till next day, had the greatest difficulty in making headway against the tempest. With the Duke and poor Ned Somerset as ballast in our fly, the wind did not affect us. In the chapter I wrote for the Badminton volume on the 'Poetry of Sport,' I said so much about the origin and progress of the Library that I must not repeat myself here at length. The Duke was good enough to welcome my co-operation with much cordiality, and in all the books which had anything to do with horses, as well as in the 'Shooting' and one or two others, he worked with the most conscientious diligence, most carefully supervising every page. Of the 'Driving' book he wrote not very far short of half with his own hand; to the 'Hunting' he also contributed, and he wrote the Introduction to the 'Riding;' but the statement, originated, I think, in the 'Daily Telegraph,' and since copied in many other papers, to the effect that he was part author of the 'Racing and Steeplechasing' volume is incorrect. With the exception of some few pages by Mr. W. G. Craven, the whole of the 'Racing' was the work of the late Lord Suffolk, and every word of the 'Steeplechasing' I wrote myself. Mr. Arthur Coventry went over the various chapters with me when they were written, giving me the benefit of his advice and experience, and sometimes, as I have elsewhere described, suggesting that we should go down to Danebury and discuss any questionable points with Tom Cannon out on his downs when the horses in training were available for purposes of practical demonstration. I fear it would be impertinence to dwell on the calm courage and cheerful resignation

with which the Duke faced the misfortunes which fell to his lot. There is much I should like to say if I felt that I could do so without trespassing on the borders of good taste. His generosity knew no bounds. I have before me a letter from Lord Suffolk, in which he relates how somebody endeavoured to back up a preposterous request by the statement that 'the Duke of Beaufort had subscribed,' 'as if Beaufort ever refused anything to anybody!' he adds. Those who knew him best, best knew that a more kindly, courteous, generous-minded, noble-hearted man never lived, and his death creates a blank which it is utterly impossible ever to fill.

Last month I expressed the belief that Flying Fox would win the Derby, whether Holocauste came to Epsom or stayed in France, though I did not at the time of writing realise what an exceptionally good colt the son of Orme and Vampire is. I write more than a fortnight before the Derby, which will have been run about the very time that this number is published; so that it would be absurd to discuss in the future tense an event which will by then have to be spoken about in the past. I may briefly say that if all goes well with Flying Fox, and he is not recorded as a Derby winner when these lines are read, one of the greatest 'upsets' in the history of the great race will have occurred. He looks like joining the band of famous horses whose wins have to be reckoned in tens of thousands. Ascot is now at hand, and there should be some excellent sport there. I have lately watched Cyllene going what is vaguely but expressively called 'great guns;' but he will have to go that way for two miles and a half if he is to beat Le Roi Soleil, who I fully expect will worthily represent France. As regards the two-year-olds, I hope Vulpio will have sufficiently recovered from his recent accident to appear, and if so we may see him opposed by Vain Duchess, of youngsters that have already been out, and by dark two-year-olds in Diamond Jubilee, Brigadier, Captain Kettle, Kerseymere, and one or more of Lord Rosebery's sons of Ladas, of whom much is apparently expected. Probably Ascot will reveal some good two-year-olds. Flying Fox has two engagements—in the Ascot Derby and the Rous Memorial—but as he is also in the 10,000*l.* Princess of Wales' Stakes at Newmarket a fortnight later, and in the 10,000*l.* Eclipse at Sandown fifteen days after that, with the Leger and the 10,000*l.* Jockey Club

Stakes to follow, I should fancy he will not be taxed by a visit to Berkshire, where in all probability the going will be cruelly hard.

An occasional contributor to the Magazine writes: 'I have just been reading, with much amusement, the droll experiences so wonderfully well told of an Irish R.M. in your current number; and it occurred to me that possibly a perfectly true and equally Irish occurrence that happened to a brother officer of mine many years ago might be found amusing. If not, there is no harm done by relating it.

'He was home on leave from India, and had ordered a new gun from Richardson, a well-known Cork maker, who has now joined the majority. Richardson was a capital sort, and made an excellent gun. When it was ready he went to Cork to see it. "Looks A1," he said to the maker, "but I wish I could try it before taking it away. Is there any place near where I could go for an hour or two and fire a few shots?" "I don't know," said Richardson, reflectively; "but sure there's just the boy for you in the front shop; he will manage it for you if anyone can. Come, and I will introduce you."

'Accordingly, they left the back-room, and Richardson, not beating about the bush in the slightest, walked up to his customer. "Mr. Jackson, I want to introduce you to Major Young, who wishes to try a gun he has just bought. I thought you might be able to help him." "Of course I will," said Jackson, grasping Major Y.'s hand, "with the greatest pleasure in life. If Colicastle station, the third down the line, is not too far, you can go and shoot there as much as you like." "Very good of you, I am sure," said Mayor Y. "I should like to go immensely. What day would be convenient?" "Any day you like," replied Jackson; "to-morrow, if that will suit." "It will do capitally," said Major Y. Then, remembering another of the Corps who lived in the neighbourhood, he added, "I wonder if I might bring a friend for company?" "As many as you like," replied the hospitable Jackson; "the more the merrier. The train starts at 9.30, and very likely I may come too, but should I not turn up you go on without me, and you are certain of good sport—lots of birds there."

'The next morning Major Y. and his friend, accompanied by an old red setter, were at the station on the look out for their host, but as he never appeared they proceeded alone. On handing over their tickets at Colicastle station they inquired of the porter where Mr. Jackson's property was. "Close to," was the reply; "all that as far as you can see to yonder mountain belongs to him. Capital shooting," he added. "Maybe you may be wanting a boy to carry the bag." "Certainly," said Major Y., "and he can show us the boundaries too." They started, and found that the eulogies of their hospitable host were by no means unwarranted. Partridges were numerous, an odd pheasant formed a pleasing variety, several hares were bagged, whilst the snipe were ubiquitous, and although it was early for woodcock, they managed to secure a couple. Just before halting for lunch an old cock grouse on the bog made their sixth variety of game, and very proud and hilarious were they as they spread out the contents of the bag to contemplate during lunch.

'"May I ask who gave you gentlemen leave to shoot here?" asked an old weather-beaten individual from the other side of the hedge, whence he could survey the lunching party and the capital bag displayed to the best advantage. "Mr. Jackson, of Cork," said Major Y., "and maybe he may join us here by the next train. He missed the one we came by." "Mr. Jackson, of Cork," slowly repeated the old weather-beaten party, "the dirty spalpeen! Why, gentlemen, he daren't show his ill-conditioned face in this neighbourhood! He is my son, gentlemen, and because I have kicked him out for his drunken blackguard ways he revenges himself on his old father by sending you down to shoot my game. But I will be even with him. Please to hand over everything you have shot and leave my property at once, and you, Terence O'Brien," he said to the small boy, "take them the straight road out of this." Much crestfallen, and without a head of game, they took up their guns and left, cursing "Mr. Jackson, of Cork," for having taken it out of his father at their expense. But there were yet four hours to the time for their return train, and to return empty-handed after such expectations was most disappointing, so they got the boy to take them to some free ground, where they managed to secure something tangible to carry home with them.'

A correspondent writes to me: 'I see that in the current number of your interesting magazine "Rapier" again discusses the question of the proportion of kills to cartridges in game shooting. A friend has suggested to me that I should send you the results of some records I kept on this subject when I first began shooting. These results, which I enclose herewith, are accurate records of sport between the years 1887 and 1894. As you will see, I did not get much shooting at that time, but I kept a careful account of what I did get. Since then I have had a great deal more, and probably now shoot as much in one year as I did then in the eight years. I have not, however, kept a record of cartridges used since 1894, but although I have improved considerably as a game-shot, still I am sure I should not now average more than 50 per cent. of kills to cartridges used. Last November I remember at one shoot using 550 cartridges and killing 270 head. The birds were rather difficult owing to a gale of wind blowing, but I think on the whole it would about represent my average. The fact that my average has become worse although I have undoubtedly improved as a shot is due to the fact that I now fire at all game that I have the slightest chance of bagging, whereas I was formerly more cautious. I think this shows how very little use it is trying to judge a man's shooting capabilities by his average.'

Here are the figures, which seem to me interesting, as they will enable sportsmen to compare their own results.

Year	Cartridges used	Total killed	Particulars of game killed							
			Grouse	Rabbits	Hares	Partridges	Pheasants	Woodcock	Snipe	Miscellaneous Duck, &c.
1887	246	148	22	27	84	1	8	6	—	—
1888	321	209	56	113	23	7	8	1	—	3
1889	258	141	43	18	41	11	22	6	—	1
1890	227	129	53	29	26	—	8	1	3	12
1891	248	160	28	75	18	12	22	—	4	5
1892	537	339	33	110	54	31	45	10	44	12
1893	626	428	69	114	56	89	50	2	30	18
1894	633	408	118	88	53	40	30	1	31	47
Total for 8 years	3,096	1,962	422	674	355	191	193	27	112	98

JUN 1951